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THE NATIONAL POLICY AS SEEN BY THE EDITORS

OF THE MEDICINE HAT NEWSPAPERS:

A WESTERN OPINION

1885 - 1896

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend
to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled
THE NATIONAL POLICY AS SEEN BY THE EDITORS OF THE MEDICINE HAT
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degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the reaction of the editors of the Medicine Hat newspapers to the various facets of the National Policy. The period included in the study begins with the founding of the Medicine Hat Times in October of 1885 and ends with the defeat of the Conservative government in the election of 1896. During this period Medicine Hat had two papers, the Times and after March 1, 1894, its successor the News. Although there was a succession of six editors, one, J. K. Drinnan, owned the paper for over five years and it is therefore his ideas which are most completely known.

Although some authors have narrowly defined the term National Policy as the tariff policy introduced in 1879, a wider interpretation of this policy as a program to build and maintain a separate Canadian nation on the North American continent is necessary in order to understand the reaction of the western editors. Because of its location in a semi-arid area, and because of its almost total dependence on the Canadian Pacific Railway for its means of support, Medicine Hat was not a typical frontier community. The editors, while often reflecting general western opinion, recognized that on many issues Medicine Hat had interests at variance with many other western communities. The need to develop either large scale irrigation or the ranching industry resulted in the editor often holding

opinions which differed with those of other western editors on Dominion land policies. The importance of the railway to Medicine Hat's existence also produced attitudes towards the Canadian Pacific Railway which were at variance with those generally held in the Northwest. On the topics of immigration, settlement and tariffs, however, the editors came closest to supporting general western attitudes.

While the vision of the National Policy received wholehearted support from the editors of the paper during the early part of the period, the eastern bias of much of the legislation and the inability of Conservative administrations to satisfy western aspirations, particularly after the death of Sir John Macdonald, brought the National Policy into disrepute by the time of the election of 1896.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a speech given by the Hon. G. W. Ross at the unveiling of the Macdonald Monument at Kingston in 1895 one glimpses the vision of which the National Policy was the political blueprint.

When the country was submerged in the depression of 1877-78, what relief so effective and so speedy as the fatherly protection of Canadians against outside competition? "Give us our own market," said the manufacturer, "and you will all be the richer for it." "Shut out foreign products," said the farmer, "and buy from me; agriculture is the foundation of all our industries." And so, with the enthusiasm with which everybody regards a deliverer in the hour of adversity, thousands of the electors of Canada accepted this proffered bounty---this cap of Fortunatus....The venture was a bold one. It was managed, however, with consummate skill, and it succeeded. It was the triumph of a paternal policy....

But financial prosperity was not the only motive nor the strongest motive to which Sir John Macdonald felt he could successfully appeal after Confederation. Canada was no longer a "few arpents of snow." Its boundaries were the rising and the setting of the sun in two oceans. No Imperial throne, save that of England, was so broadbased territorially. No people had a greater heritage or more substantial freedom. To carp at the future of such a country, what was it but treason? To doubt the statesmanship of the man who governed it, what was it but disloyalty? And so the feeling was fostered, by some occult process... that the maintenance of Sir John's leadership and of loyalty to Canada were synonymous.¹

1. Medicine Hat News, November 14, 1895.

The National Policy was not mere political expediency, but a continuation and expansion of the policies which Confederation had brought to bear on the problems facing the British North American colonies in the 1860's. As a result of the expansive tendencies of the United States on the one hand, and Imperial indifference on the other, these colonies sought political and economic integration, first as a means of survival, but more importantly, as a means of growth. Their vision was not of a quiescent community confined to the Maritimes and the St. Lawrence valley, but of a great transcontinental nation which might even, one day, rival its southern neighbor.

It was readily seen that political unity and a feeling of common identity would be the outgrowth of economic integration and commercial progress. To this end tariff barriers between the formerly separate colonies were removed and provision was made for an intercolonial railway. It was fervently hoped that this would increase trade between the provinces and thus stimulate investment and immigration. This in turn would bring new industries, the exploitation of new resources and an era of rapid settlement. Settlement would provide a market for the increased output of the expanding industries. This enlarged domestic market was to take the place of the American market lost by the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1866. In the Confederation Debates the Hon. George Brown gave seven reasons for supporting the scheme of Confederation. All but two of these dealt with its economic advantages. It would remove the trade barriers and provide a market of four million people; make Canada the third maritime

state in the world; give a new start to immigration, on which "the whole future success of this great scheme" turned; enable Canada "to meet, without alarm, the abrogation of the American Reciprocity Treaty; and provide "a sea-board at all seasons of the year."² The basic elements of what would later be expanded and refined and ultimately christened "The National Policy" were thus an integral part of the concept of Confederation in 1865.

Nor was the place of Rupert's Land in this scheme wholly absent. In the same speech Brown recognized "the immediate necessity of those great territories being brought within the Confederation and opened up for settlement."³ It appears to have remained for Sir John Macdonald, however, to conceptualize the precise role they would play in his master plan for the economic development of modern Canada.

Settlement, the development of a diversity of resources and industries, and the transportation links to weld them together, did not result in uniform and steady prosperity immediately after Confederation. The depression which set in in 1871-73 brought general discouragement and doubts as to the viability of the union. While campaigning for three by-elections in 1876, Macdonald advocated a policy of modified protection as a means of relieving the depression.⁴ This system of

2. Parliamentary Debates on the Subject of Confederation of the British North American Provinces (Quebec, 1865), pp. 99-108. The edition used is a photographic reprint of the original published by the King's Printer, 1951. Hereafter cited as Confederation Debates.

3. Ibid., p. 103.

4. Donald Creighton, John A. Macdonald---The Old Chieftain, Vol. II (Toronto, 1955), p. 223.

protection not only brought the Conservatives back to power, but also enabled them to complete the basic structure of the National Policy.

Although Macdonald moved in the House of Commons in 1878 "that this House is of the opinion that the welfare of Canada requires the adoption of a National Policy, which, by a judicious readjustment of the Tariff, will benefit and foster the agricultural, the mining, the manufacturing and other interests of the Dominion,"⁵ it would be wrong to attach a narrow construction to the term National Policy. It was never intended as a static policy, one of protecting the existing domestic market in Canada. While Easterbrook and Aitken,⁶ Pope,⁷ and V. C. Fowke⁸ seem to imply a narrow interpretation of the term, as a policy of protection, even they recognize its place as part of a comprehensive program which also included a transcontinental railway, a land settlement policy and the promotion of immigration. For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of Robert Craig Brown most accurately captures the spirit of the National Policy:

The National Policy adopted by the Canadian Government of Sir John A. Macdonald after the election of 1878 is usually taken to encompass a domestic policy of economic nationalism based on railway building, immigration and settlement, and protective tariffs....But the spirit of the National Policy went much deeper than railways,

5. Canada. House of Commons. Official Record of Debates (1878), p. 854. Hereafter cited as Commons Debates.

6. W. T. Easterbrook and H. G. J. Aitken, Canadian Economic History (Toronto, 1956), p. 383.

7. J. Pope, Correspondence of Sir John Macdonald (Toronto, 1921), p. 243.

8. V. C. Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy (Toronto, 1957), p. 3.

immigrants and tariffs. Beneath these external manifestations was the will to build and maintain a separate Canadian nation on the North American continent.⁹

Sir Leonard Tilley doubtless had this in mind when he introduced his budget in 1879. At that time he stated that "the time has arrived when we are to decide whether we will be simply hewers of wood and drawers of water...or whether we will inaugurate a policy that will... make this a great and prosperous country, as we all desire and hope it will be."¹⁰

That the National Policy did not bring in full measure the anticipated prosperity cannot be used as a criterion to fully discredit the idea. It had been founded on an astute interpretation of the factors which had led to periods of earlier prosperity in the United States and Upper Canada. The leaders of the new Canadian nation realized that these periods of prosperity coincided with periods of abundant immigration and agricultural settlement. The needs of the newcomer and the settler created a demand for goods and services which stimulated the whole economy and, as well as the capital that the settlers brought with them to the new frontier, attracted additional investment capital. A brief improvement in market conditions in the fall of 1879 seemed to augur well for the National Policy. However, after a brief period of increased

9. R. C. Brown, Canada's National Policy: 1883-1900 (Princeton, 1964), pp. 11-12.

10. Commons Debates (1879), p. 429.

immigration and a new beginning in large scale railway construction, the country was once more overtaken by the gloom and uncertainty of the general depression which was to last until 1896. Another brief revival in world trade which occurred from 1888 to 1890 brought little effect in Canada due to poor crops and bank failures.¹¹ Under these circumstances it is possible to argue that no general scheme of development had much chance of creating the hoped-for prosperity. The Liberals under Mackenzie had not succeeded in avoiding the effects of the depression. The Mackenzie administration seemed only to underline the negative approach of the Liberals to national policies: the railway was to follow settlement; government spending was to be reduced; the imperial tie was to be loosened and the tariff lowered. By 1887 the Liberal party supported continental free trade, and was portrayed by Macdonald as steeped in "veiled treason" which could lead only to American annexation.¹² Macdonald's Conservatives, therefore, appeared to offer the only hope of improvement.

In 1869 an agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company provided for the transfer of the company's territorial rights to Great Britain and then to the Dominion of Canada. In this way, the Northwest Territories became available for inclusion in the concept of the National Policy virtually from its inception. That this policy would at all times

11. D. V. Smiley (ed.), The Rowell Sirois Report, Vol. I (Toronto, 1963), p. 69.

12. J. H. S. Reid, K. McNaught and H. S. Crowe, A Source-Book of Canadian History (Toronto, 1959), p. 352.

meet with the approval of the inhabitants of the Territories, even though their very existence as a part of the new Dominion was in large measure a result of it, cannot be accepted. The people of the Northwest Territories recognized the investment which eastern Canada had made in their development through the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. They also recognized their continuing need of assistance in almost every facet of their economic and civil development. They refused, however, to believe that gratitude should make them subservient to the east. Continually, they felt compelled to remind Ottawa that they felt their development would ultimately profit the east in far greater measure than their present expense. Often the comment appeared that the railway was built also to bring British Columbia into the union, that the monopoly clause in the Canadian Pacific charter prevented branch lines that would speed settlement and give them a market for their products south of the border, and that the system of distributing railway lands slowed settlement and the provision of local services. The tariff policy of the Dominion made their every necessity more expensive without giving them any sure market for their produce. Not enough effort or money was devoted to attracting settlers. Dominion land policies were often not suited to a particular area. The National Policy opened the Northwest as a Canadian frontier of settlement, but at the same time, tended to stifle its rapid development. Until after 1896, when the price of wheat and the cost of transportation came into a favorable balance, no merely Canadian policy could attract

the waves of settlers which would bring sustained prosperity to the Northwest. Although the Medicine Hat country would not develop as a major farming area, its future was inextricably joined to the wheat economy of the Northwest as a whole. Those factors, largely outside Dominion control, which tended to promote rapid settlement based on this staple, also affected Medicine Hat. A large influx of settlers to the west generally, tended to people this area also, while a period of relative inactivity in immigration affected Medicine Hat in like measure.

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Before attempting to deal with the reactions of the Medicine Hat newspapers to the National Policy, it is necessary to provide a brief description of the area in question. Unlike most of the areas of the Northwest which received settlers before 1896, Medicine Hat and the area tributary to it was not generally well suited to growing cereal grains. Rather, its chief importance was as a ranching area and railway division point, with the prospect of developing some light industry based on its natural resources and its location on the railway.

When Captain Palliser visited the area in 1858 he reported that:

The South Saskatchewan flows in a deep and narrow valley, through a region of arid plains, devoid of timber or pasturage of good quality. Even on the alluvial points in the bottom of the valley trees and shrubs only occur in a few isolated patches. The steep and lofty sides of the valley are com-

posed of calcareous marls and clays that are baked into a compact mass under the heat of the parching sun. The sage and the cactus abound, and the whole of the scanty vegetation bespeaks an arid climate.... Towards the confluence of the Red Deer River and the South Saskatchewan, there are extensive sandy wastes.¹³

The Palliser expedition also described the area of the Cypress Hills, which lie about thirty-five miles south of Medicine Hat and stretch to the east.

To the south of the [South Saskatchewan] river...at the Cypress Hills, there is abundance of water and pasture, and also a heavily timbered slope facing the north, where spruce, firs, pines, maple and many kinds of shrubs flourish in abundance, while for hundreds of miles around in every direction there is no appearance of the plains having ever supported a forest growth.¹⁴

The lands [of the Cypress Hills] exhibit great diversity of surface and are rolling and well adapted for sheep; the timber is abundant and more substantial in bulk than that to the eastward, and therefore better suited for building purposes; lime-stone exists in great quantity, and the beds of some rivers afford argillaceous clay capable of being converted into bricks, and coal of a fair quality was found in considerable quantity.¹⁵

With the exception of the Cypress Hills, the area around Medicine Hat was within the "Palliser Triangle" or what he described as "Arid Plains." In his Report in Reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway 1879, Sanford Fleming quoted William Ogilvie as having reported in 1878 that "the country to the west of the Cypress Hills [is] generally gravelly and in some places rather sandy, very little

13. John Warkentin, The Western Interior of Canada---A Record of Geographic Discovery 1612-1917 (Toronto, 1964), p. 187.

14. Ibid., p. 187.

15. Ibid., pp. 188-189.

water and that mostly alkaline, also very little wood. Coal is revealed in some of the ravines which run into the Saskatchewan."¹⁶ R. W. Murchie presented a similarly pessimistic picture of the area.

Because of the nature of the soil, the frequent inadequacy of rainfall, and susceptibility to drought conditions and crop failures, the land in this [the Medicine Hat] part of the prairies has been considered definitely marginal, and the history of the localities studied suggests some doubt as to the value of the land for agricultural purposes.

The average annual precipitation recorded at Medicine Hat over the period 1885-1914 was 12.79 inches....Between six and six and one-half inches of rain fell during the months of April to July, inclusive. In the month of June about two and one-half inches may be expected.¹⁷

Although the average warm-season precipitation in the Cypress Hills is about eleven inches,¹⁸ the foregoing information makes it difficult to understand the enthusiasm with which the Medicine Hat Times boomed the area as an ideal one for farming. Editorials in 1885 were consistent in their advocacy of the country's suitability for both ranching and agriculture. The first issue of the paper said, "while these great natural advantages stamp it pre-eminently a stock country, it promises to become no mean competitor

16. Sanford Fleming, Report in Reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway 1879 (Ottawa, 1879), p. 119.

17. R. W. Murchie, "Agricultural Progress on the Prairie Frontier," Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. V (Toronto, 1936), p. 265.

18. A. S. Morton, "History of Prairie Settlement," Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. II (Toronto, 1938), p. 83.

with eastern countries in the growing of grain and roots."¹⁹ Later in the same month it stated that "Ontario which has hitherto been considered 'the garden of Canada,' is not better adapted to the growing of fruit than that part of the country surrounding Medicine Hat. We will soon vie with Ontario."²⁰ Only gradually was it recognized that settlers who came to the area, invested capital and labor and then failed to get a crop were the worst possible advertisement for a country which hoped to attract immigration. The early optimism is possibly more understandable if one remembers that wet and dry years tend to come in cycles. Hedges noted that while Palliser and Hind had "shown much of the treeless prairie to be unsuited to settlement," Sir Sanford Fleming and Botanist-Professor John Macoun later "asserted much of the treeless prairie was capable of being settled."²¹

When referring to the suitability of the area for ranching, the Times was on much firmer ground. Cattle were able to forage for themselves almost the year round, for as a result of chinooks, deep snow did not often remain long. The fact that little hay needed to be put up reduced considerably the expense of winter feeding. In addition, the winter season was usually relatively

19. Medicine Hat Times, November 5, 1885.

20. Ibid., November 19, 1885.

21. J. B. Hedges, Building the Canadian West---The Land and Colonization Policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway (New York, 1939), p. 35.

short. With great enthusiasm, the editor, A. M. Armour, wrote: "during the short winter of six to eight weeks the snow seldom lies more than a day or two at a time, and is never deep enough to prevent grazing."²²

In 1870 Lieutenant-Governor Archibald assigned Capt. W. F. Butler the task of examining the conditions prevailing in the farther west. In his report he referred to the war of extermination being conducted by the Americans against the Indians. He recommended the appointment of a civil magistrate, the organization of a well-equipped force of from one hundred to one hundred fifty policemen and the extinguishing by treaty of Indian titles to the land.²³ The destruction of the buffalo herds, the pacification of the area by the North-West Mounted Police, the settling of the majority of the Indians on reserves and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway prepared the Medicine Hat area for the arrival of the ranchers. However, tariffs and world market conditions, freight rates and quarantine, the Dominion land lease policy, and above all, climatic variations upon the ranges themselves, still had to be endured.

22. Medicine Hat Times, November 5, 1885.

23. J. P. Turner, The North-West Mounted Police, Vol. I (Ottawa, 1950), p. 70.

Although the first person to settle in the vicinity of what is now Medicine Hat arrived in 1882, the town from its founding in June of 1883 was based on the needs of the Canadian Pacific Railway. When the railway was completed to Maple Creek in the fall of 1882, James Sanderson moved his herd to the flats near the site of the present city of Medicine Hat. The need to bridge the South Saskatchewan, to set up a supply depot, and to provide a divisional point with a sure source of water were the reasons for choosing the site of the future city. Naturally, merchants arrived and services sprang up to supply the needs of the bridge and track laying crews, and later the divisional headquarters and shops. Ranchers and farmers established themselves in the area, but it was not until after the turn of the century that they appear to have supplanted the railway employees as the chief means of support of the community. Thus it must be remembered that, like the town itself, the newspaper it supported would have to reflect the prevailing interest of the industry which provided its livelihood. Although alive to the needs of the Northwest in general, and while attempting to attract settlers and ranchers to the vicinity, the papers could not, in this period, be considered as typical of those of the Territories generally. While it could be argued that many communities of this region owed their beginnings to the railway, few remained so dependent on it for so long a period.

There seems to be some confusion about the founding of the first newspaper, the Medicine Hat Times. In "The Story of the Press," J. W. Morrow wrote, "in the fall of 1884...the paper was issued, with Mr. Armour as the first editor."²⁴ Senator Gershaw stated that the paper, which he mistakenly called the Medicine Hat News, "was founded in October of 1885 in a disused C.P.R. box car by A. M. Armour and T. B. Braden."²⁵ Because both refer to Armour as editor and mention that the paper was published in an abandoned box car, it must be assumed that they refer to the Medicine Hat Times, the first copy of which probably appeared on October 29, 1885. The earliest issue which could be found was published November 5, 1885, with A. M. Armour listed on the masthead as editor, publisher and proprietor, and was identified as Vol. I, No. 2.²⁶ This early four-page paper reported local news with a smattering of international events, primarily the movements of the various members of European royal families. Its only foray into the realm of national politics, during this period, was in relation to federal representation for Western Assiniboia. At that time it was hoped that Assiniboia would receive three members, one from Medicine Hat. When it was later

24. J. W. Morrow, "The Story of the Press," Canadian North-West Historical Society Publications, Vol. I, No. IV, Pt. I (Battleford, 1928), p. 74.

25. F. W. Gershaw, Saamis (Medicine Hat, n.d.), p. 129.

26. Medicine Hat Times, November 5, 1885.

disclosed that Assiniboia would receive two members at large, the first instance of local discontent with Ottawa appeared. This, the editor felt, would effectively deprive the western region of a voice in parliament as, "while Eastern Assiniboia depends almost entirely on agricultural resources, the western part has its stock and coal interests as staple means of existence."²⁷ Armour had come from Barrie, Ontario to found the Calgary Herald with T. B. Braden in August of 1883. Although his stay in Calgary was relatively short, his stay in Medicine Hat was even shorter, being somewhat less than six months.

In the period before 1900, three local men seem to have had a great influence over the editorial policy of the papers of Medicine Hat. The first editor had been recruited by a committee of local citizens which included among others W. Cousins, a pioneer merchant, and Thomas Tweed, who was subsequently a member of the Territorial Assembly. The other member of this trio was J. M. Niblock, who arrived later as Assistant Superintendent of the C.P.R. It would appear that Armour's views did not find favor with the first two of these citizens as he "relinquished" the paper to William Cousins in the spring of 1886. Mr. Cousins apparently found the duties of editor somewhat burdensome as he soon relinquished his duties to a

27. Medicine Hat Times, May 6, 1886.

rather unprepossessing stranger who had arrived broke and on foot.

In assuming management of the paper, J. B. McMahon stated his editorial policy in this way:

We are aware of the responsibilities that rest upon us: also our obligations to the public, and to discharge our duty as a journalist without fear or favor will be our aim.

Politically the Times is independent and will heartily support any measures that will benefit the Northwest, no matter by whom introduced.

In short, the paper will be devoted to the interests of Medicine Hat and vicinity, and no pains will be spared to make it worthy of the place it represents and we are confident that we will have the hearty co-operation and support of every person interested in the ²⁸ prosperity of the village and surrounding country.

As editor, he strongly supported Thomas Tweed for the Conservative nomination for the federal riding of Western Assiniboia. When N. F. Davin received the nomination, the paper transferred its support to the Reform candidate, James Ross. Immediately after the election of Davin, whom the paper had repeatedly villified, on February 22, 1887, McMahon retired due to ill health. It is possible that the editor had discharged his duties without sufficient "favor" to the Irishman and that the stockholders of the Times had come to "fear" for the interests of their community. It must be noted, however, that during this period the patent inside pages of the paper were discarded and a four-page local edition was

28. Medicine Hat Times, July 15, 1886.

instituted. Also, many articles and features appeared relating the early history of the area, and advertising its natural resources and prospects for agriculture and ranching.

About a month later, the stockholders succeeded in retaining a new editor, Mr. D. G. Holt, and the paper resumed publication.

During the two years which he served in that capacity, he enjoyed a popularity in Medicine Hat not accorded his predecessors.

While McMahon had referred to Davin as "utterly unfit...to represent any Northwest constituency,"²⁹ the population of Medicine Hat gave the Conservative candidate a large majority at the polls. Holt appears to have summed up the prevailing opinion of the area when he wrote that some papers were spending too much time criticizing Davin before they had adequate grounds to do so, and went on to say that: "Until then his bills should be given a candid and unbiased criticism. If it is seen their passage would be beneficial to the territories then they should be encouraged, regardless of Mr. Davin's party affiliations or personal characteristics."³⁰ Just previous to the appearance of that article the editor had stated his policy in these words:

An esteemed contemporary referred recently in a good-natured sort of way to our improvement in politics. We are always pleased to be thought improving, but politics we avoid. The Times...object is to further,

29. Medicine Hat Times, January 15, 1887.

30. Ibid., February 23, 1888.

in every way possible, the interests of Medicine Hat and surrounding country. And we believe the paper that takes a purely independent stand in a young and progressive country, such as ours, places itself in a position to do infinitely more good than if it was compelled to consider the interests of party in every line that it writes.³¹

This attitude characterized the paper throughout the rest of the period up to the election of 1896. Although specific policies of the government or the opposition might be strongly criticized, or even praised, this appears to have been done strictly in relation to the particular needs and interests of the area. Even through the relatively rapid changes of administration in Ottawa between 1891 and 1896 issues rather than party or personality were the main concern of the editors. Matters not of direct concern to the Northwest, if referred to at all, were treated briefly and with relatively little political bias apparent. The laconic announcement that follows is but one example of this attitude.

Lieutenant-Governor Masson of Quebec resigned his position on account of illness. The Hon. Mr. Chapleau is to be appointed lieutenant-governor of Quebec on account of illness. Queer, isn't it?³²

These men, busy trying to build a new community in a raw land, appear at first not to have recognized the importance of the affairs of eastern Canada to their progress. The issue of the Canadian

31. Medicine Hat Times, February 9, 1888.

32. Ibid., June 18, 1887.

Pacific's monopoly clause was the first issue to make a real dent in this provincialism. The settlers saw a need for branch lines as a means to develop the resources of the country and felt that this need should be obvious to all of Canada. An editorial in the summer of 1887 put their case quite bluntly.

It is simply disgusting to see the unanimity of ignorance displayed by Eastern papers with regard to Northwest matters....Grit and Tory papers are alike in this respect. On certain matters of vital interest to the Northwest, the press of both parties, with few exceptions, wear a collar around their necks which proclaim their servility to large railway corporations....Do they expect that a small, stunted, restricted community of a few thousand can furnish dividends for millionaire monopolists---and at the same time thrive? Does a mother strangle the child at birth?³³

Numerous other editorials continued to deplore the ignorance of the eastern press in regard to Northwest needs. The liquor question and the desire for Territorial responsible government were issues which gradually sharpened their political awareness. The issue, however, which brought western Canada into the national limelight, and consequently demanded their involvement, was the Manitoba school question. But even during that agitation the paper remained notably free of party involvement and pleaded for western solidarity rather than political partisanship.

33. Medicine Hat Times, May 21, 1887.

The Times prospered during the first year under Holt's stewardship, so much so, that at the annual meeting of the shareholders on February 7, 1888 a dividend of ten per cent was declared.³⁴ Emboldened by the success and popularity of the paper, the Times decided to publish a daily edition starting on May 7, 1888 under the name of the Medicine Hat Daily Times. The reason for the daily paper seemed to be to try to attract the capital which was sorely needed to develop the resources of the area. The need of the community was expressed this way in the announcement:

It is time that money, to no limited extent, should be invested in a district only awaiting development to assist it in proclaiming its superiority over the adjoining territories. An inadequate capital is the only drawback to the city and adjacent country, and believing that the publication of a daily paper will overcome this disadvantage, we have deliberately arranged for the same.³⁵

The financial propriety of the change of publication schedule for a community of six hundred seemed in doubt from the beginning, and after a short time the increased expense, with little apparent increase in revenue, forced it to revert to a weekly. Daily publication was not attempted again in Medicine Hat until 1911.

D. G. Holt left the Times in March of 1889 to accept a position with the Calgary Tribune and later moved to San Francisco where he opened a printing office. That he had the support of the community

34. Medicine Hat Times, February 9, 1888.

35. Ibid., May 3, 1888.

at large during his tenure as editor is amply borne out by the fare-well banquet tendered him on his departure. It would appear that this popularity did not rest only on his lack of political partisanship and identification with efforts to promote the town, for at the banquet much was made of his successful efforts to establish a baseball club in Medicine Hat.

On Mr. Holt's departure the paper was purchased by J. K. Drinnan, who had come to Medicine Hat as principal of the school in 1888. Although he had been born in the Georgian Bay region of Ontario, Drinnan was considered a very well-travelled man for those days, having been in Africa and the Holy Land before coming to Medicine Hat. This and the tone of the article setting forth his editorial policy would lead one to expect the paper to have broadened its horizons even though the new editor had no previous newspaper experience. This did not, however, turn out to be entirely so. In the first year, the paper tended to narrow its field of interest almost exclusively to the town and its environs. While still promoting immigration to the area, in articles which were often repetitive and lacking in inspiration, much of the paper was made up of "social news" and local crusades. Although the Times acquired an Ottawa "correspondent"³⁶ in 1890, and its field of interest gradually broadened, it was this tendency to become embroiled in local issues that resulted in

36. Medicine Hat Times, January 23, 1890.

Mr. Drinnan having to give up the paper in 1894. Friction developed between the editor and Canadian Pacific Railway officials over what is called the "Medicine Hat Rape Case" in 1891, and also between Superintendent Niblock and the editor over the administration of the Hospital, of which Mr. Niblock held the chairmanship of the board. The editor's refusal to support Mr. Tweed, a local merchant, against N. F. Davin, in the election of 1891, also displeased a number of citizens.

In order to avoid giving the impression that the editor's views were at variance with those of a large portion of the population, it would appear necessary to deal with these cases of friction. In addition, it should be noted that with the exception of his opposition to Thomas Tweed in the federal election of 1891, it was primarily the Superintendent of the C.P.R., a man naturally both respected and feared in Medicine Hat, whose enmity he unfortunately incurred.

The issue which prompted the Times to support N. F. Davin over the local candidate, Thomas Tweed, arose when Mr. Davin's fitness to represent the constituency was called into question at a meeting in Medicine Hat. Davin, who had won the Conservative nomination over Tweed by a small margin, appeared intoxicated at the meeting. Mr. W. Cousins, the man who had nominated Tweed at the convention, moved a motion of censure instead of the usual one of support. Although the censure motion was carried by an overwhelming majority, Mr. Tweed repledged himself to "support Davin as long as he was in

the field."³⁷ When Tweed went back on his word, and accepted an independent nomination, Drinnan declined to support him. When the votes were counted, even though Medicine Hat voted one hundred forty-five for Tweed to fifty-eight for Davin, the Times commented that:

...the electors of Western Assiniboia have said, with no uncertain sound, they prefer an experienced and tried man, who having committed a fault, has the manliness to acknowledge it and promise to do better in future, to an inexperienced, untried man, who in his ambition to grace the lobbies and drawing rooms of Ottawa, breaks a most solemn pledge.³⁸

Shortly after the election, Drinnan, as a self-appointed champion of morality, once more caused offence to the powers of Medicine Hat. On the basis of what were believed to be sworn affidavits, the Times charged a C.P.R. roadmaster with indecent assault on a young immigrant girl. After having demanded an investigation by C.P.R. officials, he was sued for libel when the girl retracted her statements. Doubtless, the Times' support of the trainmen in their strike against the C.P.R. in 1892 also offended Superintendent Niblock.

Although other Northwest papers expressed support for the stands taken by Drinnan, and although he still appeared to have the support of a large portion of the population of Medicine Hat, he was finally forced to admit defeat early in 1894. The coup de grace was efficiently effected when the Medicine Hat Printing and Publishing Co.

37. Medicine Hat Times, February 26, 1891.

38. Ibid., March 6, 1891.

was formed. From the Notice of Application for Charter it can be determined that of the twenty-six directors of the new company, nineteen were employees of the C.P.R. under Mr. Niblock's jurisdiction, two were independent citizens and the affiliation of four cannot be determined.³⁹ Convinced that few would dare to support him at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the C.P.R., he sold his plant to the new company and left Medicine Hat.

Although accused of not advertising the Medicine Hat area sufficiently, it must be stated that Drinnan did no worse than his predecessors or successors. His articles, at least from 1890 on, were frequent and much more in keeping with the possibilities of the country than those of former editors. He also made an earnest effort to further the interests of the Northwest generally. His attitude toward the policies of the government of the day may best be summed up by the introduction to an editorial on the results of the election of 1891. He stated that "the result is a clear vindication of Sir John's past course; not that his every act has been endorsed but the general policy of the Conservative party is acknowledged by the electors of Canada to be superior to that of the Liberals."⁴⁰ Of the six editors the Medicine Hat paper had during the period 1885 to 1896, Drinnan is the most consistent supporter of Macdonald and the broad lines of the National Policy. After Macdonald's death the editor wrote:

39. Medicine Hat Times, February 15, 1894.

40. Ibid., March 12, 1891.

The appropriateness of a Northwest memorial to Sir John Macdonald will scarcely be called in question as to him more than to any other one man, does the Northwest owe its present development, the rapidity of which has scarcely ever been equalled in colonization efforts. Many in ascribing the opening out of this country to the building of the C.P.R., overlook the fact that the road would not yet have been built but for Sir John. The development of the Territories is still in its infancy, and the advancement has not been so marked as it will be in the future. Still if we compare the development of this country with that of the neighboring States and Territories during the same period of their colonization it will be found our advancement has been more rapid....No one will deny that the credit for this truly wonderful development belongs to Sir John Macdonald. His was the guiding hand which, within a few short years, peopled this wilderness of prairie with thousands of prosperous families and showed to the world our wealth of resources.⁴¹

On March 1, 1894 the Medicine Hat Times ceased publication and was replaced by the Medicine Hat News, owned by the Medicine Hat Printing and Publishing Co. The new editor was Mr. A. M. R. Gordon, assisted by Mr. F. G. Forster as business manager. When Mr. Gordon left in 1895 his duties were assumed by F. G. Forster.

As the friction between Drinnan and Niblock had not been particularly evident until shortly before he left, there was little real change in editorial policy toward local affairs. Also, in the territorial election campaign of 1894, between Tweed and an Edward Fearon of Maple Creek, the News remained strictly neutral. This was

41. Medicine Hat Times, July 16, 1891.

exactly the same position as had been taken by the Times in the territorial election late in 1891, even after having opposed Tweed in the federal election earlier that year. In the federal field, there seems to have been a gradual shift from the independent stand that Medicine Hat papers had espoused before, to a more Liberal approach. As the Liberal candidate, whom the paper had endorsed, withdrew, the paper professed its neutrality. In practice, however, the paper tended to favor the platform of the Patron candidate as it approached most closely that of the Liberals.

Why had the newspaper of Medicine Hat ceased to support the broad outlines of the Conservatives' policy for the development of Canada? The answer is not simple. In part, there was doubtless a disillusionment with the National Policy itself. Years of frustration brought on by the government's ineffectiveness in settling the west, in the face of the depression in world trade, was probably at the root of the multiplicity of complaints. Also, the Conservative stand on the Manitoba school question probably highlighted the government's growing inability to provide strong and effective leadership in the years after Macdonald's death. Finally, despair of obtaining favorable tariff and trade concessions sapped Conservative support in Medicine Hat.

Although N. F. Davin represented Western Assiniboia all through this period, he did not win his majority in Medicine Hat. The reason for this lay more in sectional jealousy within the constituency than

in opposition to the National Policy as there appears to have been general support for it throughout most of the period. Resentment of the pre-eminent position of Regina in the favors of the federal representative, however, was exhibited at the polls. Only after Laurier's visit to Medicine Hat in September of 1894 did the Liberals begin to appear as a reasonable alternative to the Conservative government.

CHAPTER II

RAILWAYS

At the very heart of the National Policy lay the question of railways. The National Policy was a product of the railway age in the sense that the integration of a transcontinental economy was not possible for British North America before its advent. On the other hand, it was the coming of the railways and more particularly the transcontinental railways of the United States, that made the development of a transcontinental transportation system in Canada so essential.

The building of the western American lines was causing the rapid settlement of the available land in that country. As desirable land became scarce, American settlers began to look northward to the plains of the Canadian Northwest as an increasingly-desirable area of settlement. This fact did not go unnoticed by the Canadian government in the early years of Confederation. The Red River rebellion of 1870 served to show just how tenuously the Dominion held these newly-acquired territories to the west. The attitude of one American railroad towards Canada's claim to the Northwest, and Macdonald's reaction to it, throws light on this aspect of the question. In early 1870, C. J. Brydges, the general manager of the Grand Trunk, informed Macdonald of a conversation he had had with the president of the Northern Pacific. Brydges stated that "I am quite satisfied from the

way Smith talks to me, that there is some political action at the bottom of this...to prevent your getting control of the Hudson's Bay Territory." In replying to this letter Macdonald commented that he felt:

...not only from this conversation, but from advices from Washington, that the United States Government are resolved to do all they can, short of war, to get possession of the western territory, and we must take immediate and vigorous steps to counteract them. One of the first things is to show unmistakably our resolve to build the Pacific railway.¹

During the agitation for the removal of the monopoly clause from the Canadian Pacific charter, eastern groups were to claim that the railway had been built for the benefit of Manitoba and the Northwest at great expense to eastern taxpayers. The Northwest and Manitoba were to counter with the claim that the Canadian Pacific was built "to fulfil a pledge given to British Columbia."² In his History of Transportation in Canada, Glazebrook throws some light on the background of the railway. In dealing with the negotiations between British Columbia and the Canadian government in 1870, he said:

In regard to communications, the representatives of British Columbia asked that a survey for a railway be commenced at once, and that a waggon road be completed within three years after Confederation. The Dominion government, however, on its initiative shouldered the much more onerous burden of beginning within two years, and completing within ten, a railway to connect

1. Joseph Pope, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

2. Medicine Hat Times, May 28, 1887.

the seaboard of British Columbia with the railway system of Canada.

Why the Canadian government undertook this gratuitous obligation is not altogether clear, but a number of explanations may be offered: that the waggon road was an additional and unnecessary expense; that there was fear of an invasion of American railways; or that it was useful for the Canadian government to bind parliament to a task which perhaps could not have been attempted under any other conditions.³

Inescapably, one is drawn to the conclusion that in the case of the Canadian Pacific Railway, as in the other economic policies of the central government towards the west, policies were designed in the interests of eastern capital. The desire to possess the Hudson's Bay lands in the west resulted from a need to acquire "a region of frontier settlement capable of rapid development and capable in turn of stimulating development in other parts of the Dominion."⁴ Fowke states that the Canadian Pacific, like the Intercolonial Railway before it, was an "agency of the state designed for the furtherance of the national policy."⁵ This is borne out by the fact that when the Hudson's Bay Company lands were acquired in 1870, they were retained by the federal government, and administered "for the purposes of the Dominion" until 1929. The initial purpose was to use these lands to provide grants for the building of railways. These grants

3. G. P. deT. Glazebrook, A History of Transportation in Canada 1867-1936, Vol. II (Toronto, 1938), p. 47.

4. W. A. Mackintosh, The Economic Background of Dominion-Provincial Relations (Ottawa, 1939), p. 15.

5. V. C. Fowke, op. cit., p. 52.

were given not only in consideration of railway mileage constructed on the prairies, but also for mileage north of Lake Superior and through the mountains. The grants, however, all came from western lands. The lines built on the basis of these land grants were expected to stimulate settlement, which in turn would provide opportunities for investment and trade for eastern Canadian enterprises.

In order to understand the highly emotional nature of western, and particularly Medicine Hat, reaction to various aspects of railway policy, such as the monopoly clause and freight rates, it is necessary to examine the interrelationship of tariffs and the railroads. The railway linking eastern Canada with the west, in itself, did not necessarily mean the development of east-west trade. The railway merely provided the facilities to make it possible. The monopoly clause could only be a short-term means of preventing the physical links being developed between western Canada and American railroads such as the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern. Some more durable link between the east and the west had to be forged to prevent the integration of the Canadian regions with their counterparts in the United States. Therefore, the tariff was designed to insure that the west would provide a market for the manufactured goods that it was hoped the east would produce. This two-way traffic was necessary for the railway system to operate economically; the produce of western Canada would move eastward over the line and the manufactured goods of the east would move westward. This growth and diversification of the Canadian economy, along with the tariffs, would

in turn provide the revenue necessary to ease the financial burden of these improvements in transportation.

It would be wrong to say, though, that the west would necessarily have been devoid of rail transportation without the National Policy. Throughout the period before 1900, American lines would have been only too willing to build feeder lines into both the prairie and mountain regions of the west. The National Policy effectively prevented this, forcing Canadian trade into the transcontinental pattern that has largely endured to this day. In this light it is understandable, that while a westerner could support the goal of the National Policy, to build a national political and economic unit in Canada, independent of the powerful state to the south, he would often feel that he was being exploited for the benefit of his eastern cousins. At times, Ottawa appeared to him to be the center of an empire of which the west was only a very profitable colony.

The rising prosperity of the period just after Confederation had led the government to view the projected railway as feasible as well as desirable. Consequently they committed the nation to the project in 1870. The end of the boom in late 1873 resulted in a contraction in credit which made expansionist policies difficult to finance. By 1879, "both the price level and the physical volume of exports had fallen by twenty per cent from the peak of 1873."⁶ Macdonald's

6. D. V. Smiley (ed.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 63.

system of moderate protection, on which he campaigned in 1878, was expected not only to protect the existing Canadian market, but to ensure the capital necessary to build the railway. The resulting economic expansion was in turn expected to justify the outlay of capital for the project. The brief revival in trade in the early 1880's appeared to justify this optimism, but as it faded away criticism developed. This Great Depression was not to lift until after the defeat of the Conservative government in 1896. Thus, a justification of the National Policy was not entirely evident to western observers during the period 1885 to 1896.

ii

Sir Sanford Fleming had originally mapped out the line of the Canadian Pacific to go through the North Saskatchewan River country after crossing the Red River at Selkirk. It was then to proceed through the Yellowhead Pass. But in 1881 the company decided to use a more southerly route across the plains, going through the mountains by the Kicking Horse Pass. The reasons for this change were that it was one hundred twenty-five miles shorter, thus making construction faster and cheaper; that the southern route would "preclude the possibility of any railway building between the Canadian Pacific and the boundary-line and thus draining traffic towards the States;" that this would tap the rich resources of the Kootenay, Columbia and Okanagan valleys; the greater scenic value of this route for future

tourist trade.⁷ Because of this change of route, the railway crossed the South Saskatchewan River at a point which was a reasonable location for a divisional headquarters. The construction of a major bridge and the continuing need for a sure supply of water made this site on the railway important, in an otherwise relatively arid country. Medicine Hat, therefore, owed its origin to the railway. The divisional headquarters and shops remained the chief support of this railway town throughout the period under consideration. In 1888, in a history of the town to that date, the Times said:

... [in 1883] the first work-train of the Canadian Pacific railway reached the banks of the Saskatchewan river and with its advent immigration poured in. It was in this year that the now flourishing town of Medicine Hat was established, and a large proportion of its present population, and successful business men arrived.⁸

The population of the town and district did not increase rapidly thereafter. When the initial crews of construction workers moved on a population of about six hundred remained. In 1888 the population was still about six hundred,⁹ and the town and district had only 1,240 people.¹⁰ By 1891 the population of the town had risen to about six hundred sixty;¹¹ in 1893 an official territorial census

7. R. B. MacBeth, The Romance of the Canadian Pacific Railway (Toronto, 1924), p. 85.

8. Medicine Hat Times, May 3, 1888.

9. Ibid., February 23, 1888.

10. Ibid., May 3, 1888.

11. Medicine Hat News, May 2, 1895.

gave the population of the Medicine Hat district as 1,316;¹² in 1895, an official North-West Mounted Police census for the federal government listed the population of the town as nine hundred eighty-one.¹³ To put this idea in another way, the Canadian Pacific Railway payroll in Medicine Hat in 1888 averaged "between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per month"¹⁴ in a town with a population of only six hundred. Considering the wage scales of that period and the services that the railway workers would have needed, there can be little doubt that the town was a creature of the railway, owing its very existence to the largess of a large and impersonal business concern.

Inasmuch as the railway was Medicine Hat's "creator," it can be equally viewed, in a figurative sense, as its "cross." Without large-scale agricultural settlement or economically feasible outlets for its other resources, there was little chance for growth. The publicity resulting from the reports of Palliser, Hind, Fleming and many other early visitors, and above all the unhappy experiences of many of the early settlers in this area definitely discouraged agricultural settlement. Even though much of the soil was suitable for farming, only irrigation could overcome the deficiency of rainfall during the growing season. In a country with few dependable sources of water any project would have had to be on an immense scale to make

12. Medicine Hat Times, June 1, 1893.

13. Medicine Hat News, May 2, 1895.

14. Medicine Hat Times, March 22, 1888.

it economically sound. However, Medicine Hat was in the railway belt, and until the railway accepted or refused the reserved lands no single body could control a large enough block of land. The depressed state of trade and low price of wheat on the world market during this period, along with the availability of land in other areas, also tended to make irrigation, on the scale necessary, impractical. Even had settlement been feasible in the area during this period, freight rates would have been as limiting a factor as they proved to be in the development of the ranching industry.

The physical features of the area, therefore, resulted in railway policy playing an even greater role in the development of Medicine Hat than in most other communities in the Northwest. The area had important sources of clay for brick and tile, natural gas, water and, above all, coal. The railway provided the physical means to transport manufactures and other products to markets elsewhere if freight rates permitted them to be competitive. However, in the Canadian Pacific Railway's charter, "the government promised freedom from rate regulation until the annual earnings on the capital expended in the construction of the railway reached 10 per cent."¹⁵ In the case of Medicine Hat, the people felt that this was a major hindrance to development of its resources. Dis-satisfaction with freight rates led to a demand for the construction

15. J. B. Hedges, op. cit., pp. 24-25. From Statutes of Canada. 44 Vic., C. 1 (1881).

of competitive lines and outlets to the American market. This appeared to be especially important in the case of the coal industry. Once again the federal government had effectively prevented an obvious remedy. The charter of the Canadian Pacific Railway provided that "as a guarantee against encroachments by rivals, no competitive lines connecting with the western states were to be chartered for a period of twenty years."¹⁶ The repeated refusal to charter competing lines and, in the case of Manitoba, the repeated disallowance of provincially chartered lines, produced strong resentment in the west.

At first the Medicine Hat Times was full of praise for the railway and the government that made it possible. In an impressive front-page article in 1886, the Times quoted an article from The Railway Age extolling the virtues of the railway. Besides providing a line of transportation from coast to coast it would make it possible to "profitably" occupy the fertile lands of the Northwest and cause prosperous towns to develop all along the line.¹⁷ Neither of the first two editors, A. M. Armour or B. J. McMahon, had anything but praise for this new transportation system. While they noted that some unworthy persons elsewhere were criticizing the Canadian Pacific, they repeatedly emphasized its great benefits. An editorial by Armour put his views very clearly.

16. J. B. Hedges, op. cit., p. 25. From Statutes of Canada, 44 Vic., C. 1 (1881).

17. Medicine Hat Times, April 8, 1886.

The unity of the Dominion, so ardently desired by every true hearted Canadian, is now secured by the strong embrace of the iron bands. The political sentiments of individuals are so different that every national undertaking must have its supporters and opponents. To some minds the building of the C.P.R. suggested financial insanity. Difficulties innumerable had to be surmounted, and in spite of manifold opposition there has been a grand success. True, there have been granted very many inducements to carry on the work; yet so many and various have been the benefits conferred upon the country that it becomes impossible to study these with ingratitude.¹⁸

Just before he left in 1887, McMahon saw a very bright future for Medicine Hat as a transportation center. The western division headquarters of the Canadian Pacific were there, the Northwest Coal and Navigation Company had built a narrow gauge line from Lethbridge to the main line at Dunmore after the failure of river transportation between the two points, and a railway from Medicine Hat to Battleford was expected.¹⁹ The optimism of the paper that the railway would result in a rush of settlers and provide an outlet for products closely paralleled the rosiest expectations of the framers of the National Policy.²⁰ The enthusiasm of the welcome which both the town and the paper gave to Macdonald, when he stopped off during his tour of the newly completed railway in 1886, testified to this basic optimism. Of note is the fact that

18. Medicine Hat Times, June 24, 1886.

19. Ibid., March 26, 1887.

20. Ibid., February 16, 1886.

all subsequent members of the government who were to visit Medicine Hat were presented with an address of welcome immediately followed by a memorial ennumerating local demands. Sir John only received the address of welcome.²¹ Even during this period, however, one sees in the reprints taken from less optimistic Northwest papers or older Manitoba papers omens of the agitations which Medicine Hat was soon to join in voicing. Under subsequent editors, particularly Holt and Drinnan, the Medicine Hat papers voiced many of the same complaints as other papers in the Northwest and Manitoba against the Canadian Pacific Railway.

As early as 1886, the Times reprinted articles from Manitoba papers agitating against disallowance of provincially chartered railways that contravened the monopoly clause of the Canadian Pacific Charter.²² By the middle of 1887 the Times was crying for an end to disallowance and the removal of the Canadian Pacific monopoly. An excellent example appeared in the Times on May 28, 1887. It stated that while eastern Canadians felt they had dealt very generously with the west by building a railroad at the expense of eastern taxpayers, they should remember that it was built as a pledge to British Columbia when that province entered Confederation. Also, that the road by opening the west to settlement enhanced the value of the land held by the government. In fact, it was the

21. Medicine Hat Times, July 22, 1886.

22. Ibid., April 22, 1886.

settler who had left the comforts of a settled province or country, to whom the real debt was owed, for if justice was done them they would one day make the west not only a source of pride, but of wealth, to the Dominion. Easterners said it was not reasonable, considering what had been done for westerners, for them to ask for railroad communications with the United States because it would divert western trade, which rightly belonged to the east, to the States. This argument, the Times claimed, was ridiculous. Friends of disallowance claimed that Canadian Pacific Railway rates were as low or lower than American railroad rates. If this was so, and if Americans could still ship in goods that would undersell Canadian products, which were protected by a tariff averaging about thirty per cent, the editor claimed that any "right thinking" person would agree that it was about time an opportunity was afforded them to do so. This particular piece ended with the following eloquent appeal.

Is this country to be kept for thirteen years entirely at the mercy and for the sole benefit of Eastern manufacturers without even a hope of competition to insure us at least a safeguard from extortion? Are we, in this district which abounds in coal, to be deprived of communication with our natural market to the South, and millions of dollars thereby be kept out of the country, in order to bolster up a grinding monopoly? What inducements can be offered while such a law is in force to attract the thousands from other lands who are seeking new homes where they may be free from the burdensome taxation of the countries which they left?

We would ask our Eastern friends to regard us as fellow Canadians who are prone to claim that they form a part of this great Dominion, and not as serfs whose freedom has been sold to enrich one solitary corporation. Do not look upon us as a selfish, unsatisfied

people who want the world, but rather as a people who are struggling for those rights and liberties so dear to themselves. Assist us in getting them, and time will prove that not only the Northwest but the whole Dominion will be benefitted thereby.²³

An editorial earlier in the month had seen the retention of the monopoly clause as a manifestation of sectional jealousy, and assured the people of eastern Canada that the settlers of the Northwest were not trying to prosper at their expense. The east, he felt, should have recognized that it was utter folly to place stumbling blocks in the way of western development. A discontented population would deter immigration and thus cause the western market to remain limited. If the monopoly clause were only removed, settlers would flock to the Northwest, and its trade, because of the protective tariff, would enrich both the eastern manufacturers and the railway.²⁴

It was coal which was at the root of the agitation in Medicine Hat to have the monopoly clause removed. In the editorial cited above, the editor wrote that "if a branch line should be built to the boundary from the district we would at once command Montana as a market for our coal."²⁵ The plan of the Northwest Coal and Navigation Company, often referred to as the Galt Road, to build such a road was frequently mentioned. An application for a charter to extend their Dunmore to Lethbridge line into Montana was turned

23. Medicine Hat Times, May 28, 1887.

24. Ibid., May 7, 1887.

25. Ibid.

down in 1887.²⁶ Prior to the abolition of the monopoly clause the future of western Canadian lignite coal was commented upon in a very favorable light. In an editorial reprinted in the Times from the Winnipeg Free Press, it was pointed out that Lethbridge coal, even at twenty-two dollars a ton, was preferred to native Montana lignite which could be obtained at eight dollars per ton. The high cost of the Canadian coal resulted from having to haul it by wagon over the prairies to Benton. The editorial also referred to the report of Dr. G. M. Dawson of the Geological Survey which estimated that there were about one hundred fifty million tons of this coal in a workable position near Medicine Hat.²⁷ Even before the monopoly clause in the Canadian Pacific Railway's charter was officially removed, the Galt line was applying for a charter for its projected line and had awarded a conditional contract for widening its existing line and for the extension to either Fort Assiniboine or Fort Benton.²⁸ Although no action was taken in 1888 on the scheme, hopes remained high that the next session of parliament would grant the desired charter.

To illustrate this close connection between the monopoly clause and the development of Medicine Hat's coal fields in the minds of the citizens of the town, the Stair (Redcliff) mines provide a good example.

26. Medicine Hat Times, June 11, 1887.

27. Ibid., April 19, 1888.

28. Ibid., April 5, 1888.

Although rapid development of the coal industry did not follow the removal of the Canadian Pacific monopoly, the people of Medicine Hat had been convinced that it would, and this resulted in their support of the agitation which had begun in Manitoba. In 1886 the Medicine Hat Railway and Coal Company had received a charter to build an eight-mile railway from Medicine Hat to the coal fields.²⁹ In 1887 this same company was promised a land grant of fifty thousand acres if the line was started by June 2, 1888 and completed by January 31, 1889.³⁰ This subsidy had been opposed by a number of eastern papers and members of Parliament on the grounds that the line was part of the plant and therefore should not receive a government land subsidy. The Times was indignant and pointed out that the increased costs of starting a venture in the west fully justified the subsidy as it would bring the cost of coal down to \$3.50 per ton.³¹ Early in 1888 another mining operation in the area, the Saskatchewan mine, offered to sell its property if a local company was organized to take it over. The Board of Trade decided that it should wait to see if the Medicine Hat Railway and Coal Company was going to bring its property into operation before buying the

29. Statutes of Canada, 49 Vic., C. 86 (1886).

30. Ibid., 50-51 Vic., C. 23 (1887).

31. Medicine Hat Times, May 14, 1887.

Saskatchewan mine. The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to Mr. J. Small, the president of the Medicine Hat Railway and Coal Company to try to encourage it to commence operations:

The Medicine Hat Board of Trade has learned with pleasure, from your letter to Mr. Finlay, your intention to open your mine and build your railway during the coming summer, and that in view of your company carrying out your promise, they have postponed the organization of a local company to operate the Saskatchewan coal mine which is offered to them at a very low price. Being anxious to induce outside capital to operate a mine in our neighborhood we would, therefore, offer you every encouragement in your undertaking.³²

By May of 1888, some persons were beginning to have doubts whether the concern was going to fulfill its promise, and the Times felt it necessary to lecture the doubters:

There seems to be a desire by some people to discourage every prospect of better times, and an increase all around of the volume of business in Medicine Hat. When we have the assurance...that grading...will commence before the first of June, why can't people wait until the expiration of that period before condemning the company? When an enterprise of such importance is being promoted, and each day developing into a reality, why not lend every possible encouragement instead of discouraging every move that is made for the good of the city.³³

By September, however, the fears of the pessimists were realized and the Times reversed itself, saying that "the company, it appears, has

32. Medicine Hat Times, February 9, 1888.

33. Ibid., May 10, 1888.

spent some two years in bamboozling the public, who have now quite lost faith."³⁴ The editor went on to say that unless something was done immediately to restore confidence in the promises of the company, the community would use its influence to have the charter annulled and the subsidy withdrawn. The bravado of the Times at that point was probably a result of the news that the old Saskatchewan mining property had been bought by a group of Toronto capitalists who promised to bring it into immediate operation. Although it was opened, the limited market never permitted it to fulfill its promise and the company passed into insolvency in 1890.³⁵ The lack of a rail connection with the United States, combined with high freight rates on the Canadian Pacific, effectively prevented the development of this industry. By December, the Times was lamenting that the inability to develop the coal mines was the chief reason for Medicine Hat's lack of growth. The same editorial complained that speculators partially developed properties and then tried to sell them at a large profit without ever intending to operate them.³⁶ Even though the Times did not appear to recognize it, a very basic reason for the lack of development may well have been the general shortage of investment capital. Both companies involved in the Medicine Hat coal fields were eastern concerns and neither appears to have had

34. Medicine Hat Times, September 7, 1888.

35. Ibid., September 25, 1890.

36. Ibid., December 18, 1890.

sufficient working capital. By the time a railway to Montana came into operation, large scale capital appeared to have lost interest in the Medicine Hat coal properties.

In May of 1887 the Medicine Hat Board of Trade had passed a resolution condemning the action of the government in withholding from Manitoba the right to charter and build railways to the boundary. The Times was later to comment that "in this respect the board appeared to stand alone among the various trade organizations of the Territories."³⁷ From that time, until the removal of the monopoly, Medicine Hat's paper villified the monopoly clause continuously. One editorial noted that the government had claimed that some Manitoba and Northwest members were in accord with the government and willing to support even the disallowance of the railway charters. The editor felt compelled to ask: "are the people hereafter to understand that in order to secure concessions on any one given question it will be absolutely necessary for them to send out and out enemies to the government on all points?"³⁸ Although the agitation appears to have died down a little during the latter part of 1887, it burst forth again about the beginning of the new year. Just a month before the announcement of the terms under

37. Medicine Hat Times, April 12, 1888.

38. Ibid., June 4, 1887.

which the monopoly clause was to be removed the following appeared in an editorial:

It seems singular that men who possessed the necessary intelligence in the framing of the monopoly clause, cannot now devise some means of freeing the country from the accursed web in which they have entangled it. People talk about John A. Macdonald's Northwest policy, but we have not yet discovered of what it consists. We hope for a radical change all around.³⁹

The terms of settlement between the government and the Canadian Pacific Railway were announced in the Times on April 4, 1888. There was little significant comment on whether the settlement was reasonable or not. It was noted with some scepticism, however, that Sir John had tried to give the credit for the final decision to the Manitoba and Northwest members of Parliament, rather than to Greenway and Martin, who, in editor Holt's eyes, obviously deserved the credit.⁴⁰ By the end of May, after the first flush of enthusiasm, Holt had come to recognize that the removal of the monopoly clause would not of itself bring railway competition to the Northwest. Unlike Manitoba, the Northwest still had to depend upon Parliament to charter its railways. Somewhat plaintively he wrote that "railway monopoly still holds the reins in the Northwest. Manitoba's agitation and the government's guarantee of interest on fifteen million dollars did not tend to help us out in the least."⁴¹

39. Medicine Hat Times, March 8, 1888.

40. Ibid., April 19, 1888.

41. Ibid., May 31, 1888.

While Medicine Hat strongly protested the monopoly clause, it must be remembered that the city depended largely on the Canadian Pacific for its prosperity. Therefore, any railway development which tended to increase railway traffic through Medicine Hat had the paper's unqualified support. For example, the project of developing a fast route from Britain to the Orient and Australia via the Canadian Pacific was strongly endorsed. In 1888 the Times favored a government subsidy for a fast line of Canadian Atlantic steamers to prevent New York seizing the opportunity to develop this profitable line of communication.⁴² In 1889 Drinnan gleefully wrote that the Canadian Pacific line of steamers from Vancouver to Japan was completely cutting out the Pacific mail steamers under the American flag and that there had been a considerable increase in freight traffic over the C.P.R. as a result.⁴³ In 1893 he likewise praised the foresight and wisdom of the Canadian Pacific in establishing a steamship service with Australia as well as the one to the Orient, as it would open opportunities for Canadian trade with Australia and make Canadian transportation an important factor in the world carrying trade.⁴⁴ The attitude toward the Australian line changed, however, when early in 1894 Australian sheep began arriving on the Pacific coast. As the Northwest was unable to successfully compete with these low-priced imports, due to a lack

42. Medicine Hat Times, October 19, 1888.

43. Ibid., June 29, 1889 and November 6, 1890.

44. Ibid., May 11, 1893.

of tariff protection, the News bitterly complained that the government was neglecting the interests of western producers.⁴⁵

As early as 1886 the Council of the Northwest Territories was asking for the early construction of a railway to Hudson's Bay.⁴⁶

Even the Conservative Party platform for Western Assiniboia regarded the Hudson's Bay Railway as a prime necessity and stated that the influence of the Dominion government should be exerted on its behalf.⁴⁷

Although the Times gave some support to this proposal in the late eighties,⁴⁸ there was little real interest in a line which would probably have such a limited effect on Medicine Hat. By May of 1895, when it appeared likely that the federal government was about to grant assistance to this line, the Medicine Hat News printed a number of editorials questioning the wisdom of the venture. Their argument was not that a competing line to an Atlantic port was undesirable, but rather that there was considerable doubt as to whether the Hudson's Bay route was practical. Before \$2,500,000. was granted to subsidize the line, Forster contended that a feasibility study should be carried out. To back up this contention he said:

At the season of the year when Manitoba wants to move her immense grain crop---in the late autumn---the season when it is usually handled, the Hudson's Bay route, as far as the waterway portion is concerned,

45. Medicine Hat News, May 3, 1894.

46. Medicine Hat Times, February 18, 1886.

47. Ibid., November 27, 1886.

48. Ibid., October 30, 1886 and February 19, 1887.

would be a sealed book and would remain so for months to come. To use this route would mean that the farmer would either have to store this fall's grain crop himself...or else see it stored in elevators at Fort Churchill or Fort Nelson....If navigation was open in the Bay the year round it would put a different face on the affair altogether.⁴⁹

The editor went on to comment that an expenditure of that large a sum in the west would not be unwelcome as they were in a period of "depression and hard times." After all, the expenditures which accompanied the Northwest Rebellion ten years earlier had given many a westerner a good start. In this case, however, it was felt that the money could be better used in an "active, aggressive and sensible immigration policy."⁵⁰ In this opposition to the granting of a subsidy to the Hudson's Bay Railway, the News was actually serving the interests of the National Policy. By questioning the logic of using Hudson's Bay as an outlet to the Atlantic, the paper in fact served the purposes of those who argued for maintaining Canada's Atlantic outlet in the east. Even in the case of connecting lines with the United States, Medicine Hat's greatest hope seemed to be to develop local markets in the States for their natural resources, not to upset the main east-west movement of goods over the Canadian Pacific, on which Medicine Hat so completely depended.

49. Medicine Hat News, May 9, 1895.

50. Ibid.

While desiring a competing line to the Canadian Pacific, the Medicine Hat papers were not averse to extensions planned by that company. An excellent example of this was the proposal of a line through the Crow's Nest Pass. The line was talked of as early as 1888 as a shorter route to the coast, as one with better grades, and as a better means of tapping the rich resources of the Kootenay district.⁵¹ Again in 1891 the project was mentioned. Although not hopeful of immediate action, the Times pointed out that such a line would probably join the main line at Medicine Hat, as the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway was directly east of the pass at that point.⁵² When Van Horne also assured a Medicine Hat delegation in April of that year that the headquarters of the western division would not be moved from Medicine Hat to Calgary, the paper began to see a brighter future.⁵³ If the headquarters remained in Medicine Hat and if the new line joined the main line at that point, increased passenger and freight handling facilities and enlarged shops would result.⁵⁴ Even rumors that the line might be built as an extension of the Edmonton-Calgary-Macleod line failed to dampen their optimism because, as the editor pointed out, it would mean that "all eastbound freight would have to be hauled one hundred and fifty miles extra."⁵⁵

51. Medicine Hat Times, December 9, 1888.

52. Ibid., January 29, 1891.

53. Ibid., April 23, 1891.

54. Ibid., April 30, 1891.

55. Ibid., March 24, 1892.

On July 1, 1893 the Canadian Pacific took over the Alberta Railway and Coal Company's line from Dunmore to Lethbridge.⁵⁶ This line had received the right to extend its road from Lethbridge through the pass⁵⁷ in 1892, and this right was transferred, with the railway, to the Canadian Pacific. Again in 1895 talk of a line through the Crow's Nest Pass was revived. The editor claimed that the line would have been an accomplished fact if it had not been for the depression of the previous few years. By August he was referring to returning prosperity as indicated by an increase in the receipts of the Canadian Pacific,⁵⁸ and by November of the likelihood of an early start to the Crow's Nest branch.⁵⁹ As the Kootenay country was a mining area, it would need to import most of its food stuffs, thus opening up a large market to producers around Medicine Hat, in particular, and the Northwest in general. The editor concluded this optimistic piece with the following somewhat wistful comment:

Old Sir John Macdonald's most sanguine prediction regarding the future prospects of Western Canada were never too highly painted. The whole Dominion would have been better off had he lived to witness their realization.⁶⁰

Although not built before the election of 1896, the Crow's Nest line did materialize and in some ways its benefits to the west surpassed

56. Medicine Hat Times, April 6, 1893.

57. Statutes of Canada, 56 Vic., C. 38 (1892).

58. Medicine Hat News, August 8, 1895.

59. Ibid., November 28, 1895.

60. Ibid.

the hopes expressed by the Medicine Hat News in 1895. By the subsidy and rate-control agreement entered into by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the new Liberal government:

The Company agreed to reduce rates on grain and flour moving eastward to Fort William and beyond, by 3 cents per hundred pounds, and on agricultural implements and a specific list of settlers' equipment and supplies moving into the West, by specific percentages, typically 10 per cent.⁶¹

Thus, in the matter of the Crow's Nest Pass line the Medicine Hat paper was substantially in agreement with the aims of the National Policy. In 1895 Forster wrote that "this will mean to us that here will be a market for cattle, for sheep, for dairy products and for grain and milled stuff. A market at our doors is necessarily worth more to us than is a foreign market."⁶² Even though the Crow's Nest Pass line tended to increase the de facto monopoly of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the increased services that Medicine Hat would necessarily be called upon to provide apparently stilled any criticism in this railway town.

Just as the interests of Medicine Hat dictated the policy pursued by the Times in the case of the Canadian Pacific monopoly, these interests affected the Times' and News' policy toward the related subject of freight rates. Under editors Holt and Drinnan, the Times held the view that excessive freight rates on the western section of the Canadian Pacific tended to impede western development.

61. V. C. Fowke, op. cit., p. 54.

62. Medicine Hat News, November 28, 1895.

Possibly because of the fact that most of its shareholders were Canadian Pacific employees, the News, after its inception in 1894, was not as directly critical of rates charged by the railway. Its criticism tended to consist of reprinting, usually without comment, criticisms made by other papers and Northwest groups.

In the debate on the Canadian Pacific Railway Bill in 1880, Edward Blake said:

These people [the C.P.R.] will become the landlords of the Northwest. They will take such a share of the profit of every farmer in the Northwest as they choose to demand, consistently with there being any stimulus on the part of the farmer to raise grain for the market....If you pass this law, and if the country of which you speak so glowingly is what you depict it, if its prospects of settlement are as you hope they are, I say you are blighting these prospects by passing this law.⁶³

However, in reviewing the reasons for the slow start in settling the west, W. A. Mackintosh did not see freight rates as the primary cause.

He said:

From 1885 to 1895 transportation costs were falling rapidly, but whatever stimulus this might have provided for Canadian settlement was offset by the even more rapid decline of the Liverpool price of wheat. After 1895 the costs of transportation continued their downward course... [while] the trend of Liverpool prices was strongly upward. In this conjunction lay the economic stimulus which caused the occupation of 73,000,000 acres of land between 1901 and 1916.⁶⁴

63. J. H. S. Reid et al., op. cit., p. 316. Quoted from Commons Debates, 1880, p. 64 et seq.

64. W. A. Mackintosh, "Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces," Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. IV, pp. 9-10. Hereafter cited as W. A. Mackintosh, Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces.

While many Northwest and Manitoba papers appeared, at least from editorials reprinted in the Times and News, to feel that Blake's fears had become a reality, the Medicine Hat papers took a more balanced view. That freight rates were a burden they readily admitted, but at the same time it was recognized that the railway was a necessity, and if it was to continue to operate satisfactorily it had to have adequate revenue. Considering that Medicine Hat depended more on the railway than on local settlers for its sustenance, it is not surprising that the views of its paper would appear somewhat out of step with those of other Northwest communities. To the cry that the Canadian Pacific was discriminating against the west in the setting of its rates, the News, in 1894, gave this answer:

The road must be made to pay as a whole; and we firmly believe that the management is taking the only practical way of getting it to do so, by making the most of the local traffic, so as to cover the cost...of the service on the non-traffic producing portions, and, in the meantime, offering inducements, in the shape of reduced rates, for the attraction of traffic from points which are, at present, served by other, and foreign roads. The C.P.R. is an inestimable boon to Canada, and an indispensable factor in the development and settlement of the country, and it is only to be expected that the country should have to pay a good round price, not only for its construction, but for its maintenance in a state of efficiency, until the volume of both local and through traffic warrants the adoption of what are, at the present, rather unreasonably, called "reasonable" rates.⁶⁵

65. Medicine Hat News, April 5, 1894.

By 1886 the Council of the Northwest Territories was calling on the Dominion government to "use its influence to have freight rates on the Canadian Pacific Railway reduced."⁶⁶ Additional complaints also came from the Winnipeg Commercial. This paper's principal complaint was that local rates were so high in relation to through rates, that much of the business between localities in the west was being thrown into the hands of American firms. It was mentioned, for instance, that British Columbia was unable to ship its lumber, fruit and fish to the Northwest because of the high freight rates.⁶⁷ The Times' reply to this and numerous earlier complaints, which it had reprinted, was that Winnipeg merchants were trying to set up a monopoly of Northwest trade. Armour commented that western merchants were not complaining of the local rates, and felt that they were satisfactory for a new road.⁶⁸ This does not mean that there were never any complaints about the rates or service. For example, an 1886 edition contained the following comment on service: "We have located the oldest man in the South Saskatchewan valley. He ordered certain goods from Toronto shipped by freight, and lived long enough to receive them."⁶⁹ The rate quoted on coal was another early complaint. Considering the importance attached to this commodity in the

66. Medicine Hat Times, February 18, 1886.

67. Ibid., October 30, 1886.

68. Ibid., March 4, 1886.

69. Ibid., October 30, 1886.

minds of local residents, it was little wonder that the Times complained when it was realized that the freight rate on coal from Medicine Hat to Winnipeg was five dollars per ton, while coal shipped all the way from Pennsylvania to Winnipeg could sell for eight dollars per ton.⁷⁰ As local coal always appears to have cost at least \$3.50 to produce, this meant that the Manitoba market was effectively closed to them.

As the opposition to the monopoly clause gathered momentum in Medicine Hat, complaints about freight rates naturally became more numerous, but even then seemed to lack the intensity displayed by many other western papers. From the manner in which the Times seemed inevitably to quote another newspaper as its source for a particular complaint, one is constantly aware of the unseen but ever present influence of the Canadian Pacific officials in Medicine Hat. An article in 1887, which complained of the fact that a farmer who wanted to ship his household effects from Port Arthur to Medicine Hat and found that it was cheaper to ship them to Montreal, eight hundred miles further east, and then to Medicine Hat, was quoted as coming from the Winnipeg Free Press.⁷¹ The Macleod Gazette was the source of another article complaining of high freight rates. The editor of the Gazette found, when he ordered a new press, that it would cost him over six hundred dollars to ship it from Toronto to

70. Medicine Hat Times, August 12, 1886.

71. Ibid., September 3, 1887.

Lethbridge. After considerable correspondence the rate was reduced to four hundred dollars. The editor commented that they could have reduced the rate one-half below the reduction and still have made a bigger margin of profit than any other concern in Canada. It was further pointed out that four hundred dollars was charged for transporting the press 2,180 miles from Toronto to Lethbridge, while only thirty-nine dollars was charged for transporting it four thousand miles from Glasgow to Toronto, one thousand five hundred of that being by rail, from Halifax to Toronto. The editor concluded:

Can it be wondered that we complain? God knows, the man who deprives himself of the comforts and pleasures of civilization; who puts up with the thousand and one hardships of pioneer life, has enough of nature's obstacles to contend with. But when in addition to all this, he is oppressed and bled by a railway corporation, at whose mercy he is, and when this oppression is encouraged and upheld by the government of his country, can he be blamed for becoming discouraged?...Is it a wonder that hundreds are willing to sacrifice everything they have in the world, if by so doing they can get out of the country?⁷²

The frequency with which such reports occurred, even if they were reprints, creates the suspicion that editors Holt and Drinnan at least were in sympathy with the criticism. Also, it should be noted that the Northwest Assembly passed another resolution in 1892 that freight rates on wheat and coal were excessive and a hindrance to the progress of the country. This resolution was supported by the local member and in reporting it, the Times made no attempt to contradict or criticize it.⁷³

72. Medicine Hat Times, February 16, 1888.

73. Ibid., December 22, 1892.

From the time the News commenced publication in 1894, there was a definite change of attitude toward the matter of freight rates. Critical articles were rarely reprinted, and when they were, the News always added an editorial comment. In May of 1894 an editorial appeared, entitled "The Professional Stench Raiser," which illustrates the position taken by the new paper. The editor stated that the chronic and professional alarmist had been exceptionally numerous and aggressive in the Northwest over the preceding two years, especially since the "bottom fell out of wheat." By spreading dissatisfaction he not only fomented discontent among the settlers already in the Northwest, but prevented others coming in. He ignored the real cause of the financial embarrassment which pervaded the farming community, and the fact that it was by no means confined to the west or even to Canada as a whole. Instead the alarmist laid the whole blame for the condition on the railway freight rates and the tariff, purposely overlooking the fact that the depression existed in countries where there was no Canadian Pacific Railway, and where little or no tariff was exacted, and that it existed, too, in a far greater degree of intensity than it did in Canada. There had been no complaints about freight rates when wheat was selling at a dollar a bushel. The tariff was all right too, until wheat came down and money became scarce. The alarmist, by giving an area a bad reputation, retarded development, which reduced the volume of business done by the railways and consequently precluded the possibility, if the Canadian railways wished to escape the fate of the bankrupt roads of the United States, of

freight rates being reduced.⁷⁴ A week later the editor added to this theme, saying that farmers, when times were good, had overextended their credit to buy more land and equipment instead of paying their debts. When prices on their produce fell, they blamed the freight rates and tariffs for the hard times.⁷⁵ Clearly, the News was not about to take up the cause of those who were agitating for a reduction in freight rates.

As a result of increasing western agitation against the allegedly unreasonable rates, a commission was appointed by the federal government to investigate the charges late in 1894. While the News wholeheartedly supported the appointment of the commission, its reason for doing so appeared to be to end the bad publicity that the complaints about freight rates were giving the Northwest. This was the clear implication of the only editorial in which the News mentioned that there might have been a legitimate complaint.

If there is a grievance in this connection, and it is quite evident that in the farming communities particularly there is, it will be the duty of all to make this enquiry as full and far reaching as possible so that the vexed question of freight rates may be settled for all time to come, so far as this portion of Canada is concerned.⁷⁶

As the commission was beginning its work in Manitoba, the News reprinted an editorial from the Toronto Mail. In this editorial it was pointed out that while the inquiry would primarily be devoted to

74. Medicine Hat News, May 3, 1894.

75. Ibid., May 10, 1894.

76. Ibid., November 8, 1894.

determining whether the rates were excessive as compared to the charges made in other countries for similar services, the cost of carrying freight in western Canada must also be considered. If the Canadian Pacific Railway could not profitably haul grain at a lower figure, it could hardly be contended that additional competition would bring about a permanent reduction or that mandatory reductions would serve the best interests of the country.⁷⁷

That the Medicine Hat paper attempted to report the work of the commission fairly, however, is best illustrated by indicating the nature of some of the reports. The submission of the Winnipeg Board of Trade was very unfavorable to the railway but was reported in great detail. For example, the first class rates from New York to Winnipeg were laid out. On this route fifty-one cents was charged for carrying merchandise from New York to Fort William, a distance of seven hundred fifty-eight miles by rail and one thousand miles by water, while ninety-two cents was charged for the short journey of four hundred twenty-four miles from Fort William to Winnipeg.⁷⁸ Myriad complaints from other submissions were also reported, among them the points that while the railway complained that expenses for the western line were highest they used less coal and had less snow removal on that section; that rates were highest on the section of

77. Medicine Hat News, December 6, 1894.

78. Ibid., December 27, 1894.

railway constructed by the government and given to the company; that the Canadian Pacific quoted low rates from points where no traffic of the type quoted originated;⁷⁹ that the company changed the classification of certain types of goods so as to make a higher rate apply in the west.⁸⁰

During the time that the commission was under consideration or holding sittings the News noted that freight rates on lumber were reduced by thirty-five per cent,⁸¹ that the rates on coal were reduced,⁸² and that the railway had decided to give a special reduced rate on dressed beef, mutton and pork, from all points on their system in the west to Montreal and Toronto. Forster pointed out that railways everywhere endeavored to get the most they could, and their patrons strove, on the other hand, to have the rates reduced. The latest cut, he felt, was intended to encourage the dressed meat industry, which it was hoped, would become one of the largest and most important in the Northwest in a few years.⁸³

In referring to the report of the Railway Rates Commission, Innis stated that while rates on grain, livestock, agricultural implements, lumber and coal were lower than on American lines, merchandise and

79. Medicine Hat News, February 7, 1895.

80. Ibid., December 27, 1894.

81. Ibid., September 6, 1894.

82. Ibid., August 30, 1894.

83. Ibid., December 26, 1895.

dairy products were higher.⁸⁴ By comparison, the News only stated in this regard that Canadian Pacific rates "are exceedingly favorable as compared with the rates of American roads."⁸⁵ It was also noted by the News that as the railway had eighteen million acres of unsold land and three thousand miles of road in the west, their interests and those of the settler were identical. At the same time that the member for Western Assiniboia, N. F. Davin, was claiming credit for having endeavored to have the excessive freight rates investigated,⁸⁶ and was introducing into Parliament a resolution that the government endeavor to induce the Canadian Pacific Railway to reduce its rates ten per cent in return for a guarantee on the interest on a loan,⁸⁷ the editor of the News was reporting a speech of Edward Blake to show that the building of the Canadian Pacific had lowered the rate for the transportation of wheat from Winnipeg to Montreal to one-fifth of what it was in 1881.⁸⁸ This favorable trend was sure to continue, Forster felt, and would have a positive effect upon the settlement of the country.

iii

One aspect of the railway's policy which always received the complete support and approbation of the Medicine Hat papers, was

84. M. Q. Innis, An Economic History of Canada (Toronto, 1954), p. 255.

85. Medicine Hat News, May 16, 1895.

86. Ibid., August 30, 1894.

87. Ibid., May 23, 1895.

88. Ibid., June 13, 1895.

the manner in which the Canadian Pacific encouraged immigration and settlement. In fact, there was a marked tendency to criticize the Dominion government because its policies, in this regard, appeared to be less vigorous and effective than those of the railway.⁸⁹ That they were not alone in this view is demonstrated by an editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press, which stated that "the efforts of the C.P.R. in the matter of settling Manitoba and the North-west have been as great, and probably more methodical, than the government's."⁹⁰ In June of 1886, the Times printed an editorial which characterized the editors' feelings about Canadian Pacific settlement policies during this whole period.

Population is needed, and nothing helps to secure that for a country so much as this modern system of locomotion. The agents of the Company have been successful in bringing into the country a useful class of immigrants. Their very extensive system of advertizing exerts a beneficial tendency in securing enlarged knowledge, and in persuading people to seek homes for themselves in the fertile prairies of the Northwest.⁹¹

Histories of the Canadian Pacific Railway deal at length with the advertising and promotion of western lands in Europe and the United States. The Medicine Hat Times and the Medicine Hat News, however, appear to be most impressed with the work done by the railway in attracting settlers from eastern Canada and to a lesser

89. Medicine Hat Times, July 7, 1892.

90. Winnipeg Free Press, December 21, 1889.

91. Medicine Hat Times, June 24, 1886.

extent from the north-central United States. This preoccupation with merely Canadian migration was probably a result of the very limited success of the railway and the Canadian government in attracting settlement from Europe in the period before 1896. W. A. Mackintosh has commented, in this respect, that it was not until after 1896 that "certain basic conditions essential to the successful settlement of western Canada became favorable."⁹² The most important of these factors were a favorable ratio between the price of wheat and the cost of transportation, something that did not occur until the late nineties; a variety of wheat which would ripen during the short growing season of the west; the introduction of dry farming techniques. Until all these factors were present, foreign migration to the western plains of Canada remained small and did not, therefore, impress the Medicine Hat papers as a particularly successful aspect of railway or government policy.

From the time the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1885 it engaged actively in the promotion of the settlement of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Excursions of farmers from Ontario and the Maritimes were brought out at low fares to see the western regions for themselves. Most of these tours arrived in August in order to see the crops before the harvest commenced. In many an editorial the Times praised these efforts, noting that "the

92. W. A. Mackintosh, "Some Aspects of a Pioneer Economy," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, November, 1936, p. 460.

C.P.R. is making special efforts to turn to the Canadian Northwest the stream of emigration which for so long has flowed from the Maritime Provinces to the United States."⁹³ The only concern of the editor was that too many of the intending settlers were being enticed into settling in Manitoba without seeing the advantages which land further west had to offer. In an attempt to place the merits of Medicine Hat before prospective settlers from the east, the Times' editor, in conjunction with the Medicine Hat Board of Trade, prepared a pamphlet in 1887 to advertize the area,⁹⁴ and sent these east with local men who acted as immigration agents. At the request of the Assembly, these men, three from each of the Territorial constituencies, were annually granted passes by the Canadian Pacific to promote interest in the Northwest among their friends and acquaintances in the east.⁹⁵ Apparently these local immigration agents met with at least some success for the Times consistently praised the plan and commended the Canadian Pacific Railway for its foresight in providing the passes.⁹⁶ In order to reach a wider audience in these attempts to bring the merits of the Northwest before intending immigrants, the Times proposed a more

93. Medicine Hat Times, July 7, 1892.

94. Ibid., June 26, 1890.

95. Ibid., March 2, 1889.

96. Ibid., February 26, 1891.

liberal use of tours for newspapermen, particularly ones from England, Germany and the United States.⁹⁷ From later reports it would appear that this policy was implemented by the railway soon afterwards.

Among the many efforts made by the railway to inform people of the possibilities of the Northwest, none was more highly regarded by the Times than the establishment of demonstration farms and plots.

The farm at Stair⁹⁸ was a source of pride to the district and Medicine Hat constantly tried to make its demonstration plot superior to the others. These demonstration plots were meant for the edification of passengers passing through on the main line, and after the hospital was built, the people of Medicine Hat even supplied their garden with a caged grizzly bear to collect donations for the hospital and to attract the attention of the travellers. Editor Holt enthusiastically described these gardens in 1888:

The Canadian Pacific railway has established vegetable and grain gardens at seventeen different points on their line between Rush Lake and Strathmore. These gardens consist of a little over two acres at each point, and are neatly enclosed within painted wire fences. All kinds of grain have been sown and vegetables planted. The grounds have been artistically laid out, and the whole finished off with flowers, which as everybody in the Northwest knows, flourish as they do not in any other portion of the Dominion.⁹⁹

97. Medicine Hat Times, August 3, 1888.

98. Ibid., July 30, 1887.

99. Ibid., July 20, 1888.

As in any town which is dominated by one large concern, Medicine Hat looked to the railway officials for leadership and help in many instances. That this assistance was forthcoming is probably best illustrated by the fact that a community of over six hundred people was able to develop for fifteen years without any form of civic government. The Superintendent, John Niblock, was responsible for organizing the construction of Medicine Hat's hospital,¹⁰⁰ the first in the Territories; the first gas well was drilled by the Canadian Pacific to heat and light the greenhouses they planned to establish to supply plants for their demonstration plots;¹⁰¹ the first practical steps toward a large-scale irrigation scheme for the dry belt were undertaken by the railway.¹⁰² Naturally, all these actions drew complete support from the papers.

Although the railway was known as "the Great Colonizer," because of its many efforts to settle not only its own lands but also those held by the government, the question of the land grants themselves often created discontent. As an inducement to get railways constructed and to enhance the value of the western lands held by the government, the Dominion adopted a system of land subsidies similar to that used in the United States. This system, which had died out in the United

100. Medicine Hat Times, December 24, 1889.

101. Ibid., September 17, 1891.

102. Medicine Hat News, September 6, 1894.

States by 1871 because of complaints of abuse, was adopted in a modified form in Canada, in the same year. Macdonald's Railway Act of 1872 had provided for the land grant to be located in large blocks, and had this system been adhered to, much later criticism might have been avoided. When the Canadian Pacific Railway's charter was passed in 1881, the plan for allotting the land was made similar to the American practice of alternate sections. In addition, the railway could refuse any of the odd-numbered sections which it did not consider "fairly fit for settlement."

By 1889 the Times was criticizing the Dominion's land laws, claiming that the odd-numbered sections should be secured by the government and thrown open for settlement, and that future grants to railways should be made in blocks.¹⁰³ In the early years the reservation of these odd-numbered sections tended to cause widely scattered settlement, as settlers homesteaded free government land where possible. Scattered settlement and the fact that unsold railway lands were not taxable made the provision of essential services such as schools difficult and expensive, thus adding to the isolation and dissatisfaction of the settlers. While recognizing that it was not possible to correct the original error, Drinnan wrote in 1890 that the practical question then was "how to encourage to the fullest extent the necessary branch railways without tying up further

103. Medicine Hat Times, September 6, 1889.

immense blocks of land, thus increasing the isolation which it [was] one object of the railroads to remove."¹⁰⁴

An act passed by the Dominion parliament in 1894 appeared to hold a solution to the problem so far as Medicine Hat was concerned. In addition, it appeared to be a definite step toward the development of irrigation in the area. As it was not possible to irrigate land unless it was granted in large compact blocks, parliament authorized the Governor in Council, with the consent of the Canadian Pacific, to grant:

...so much of the subsidy lands of the said Company as remains ungranted, wholly or in part in tracts of such area as he deems expedient, and including sections bearing even, as well as those bearing uneven numbers, on that portion of the Main line of the said Company between Medicine Hat on the East and Crowfoot Crossing on the West, and within twenty-four miles on each side of the said portion of the said Company's line of Railway.¹⁰⁵

This proposal seemed to provide a solution to two major problems that faced the area around Medicine Hat. First it would result in the railway finally declaring which lands it was prepared to accept as its subsidy,¹⁰⁶ thus definitely identifying the lands which the government could make available for settlement or ranching leases; secondly it would result in the development of irrigation on a large scale, something that the Times had been promoting as far back as

104. Medicine Hat Times, May 29, 1890.

105. Statutes of Canada, 57-58 Vic., c. 7 (1894).

106. Medicine Hat News, July 12, 1894.

1887.¹⁰⁷ Although some preliminary survey work was done in connection with this project by both the Canadian Pacific and the government,¹⁰⁸ it was not acted on. In 1895 the News was still optimistic that the railway would see its way clear to undertake the project as they were sure it would prove a success and initiate large-scale immigration to the area.¹⁰⁹ It was not, however, until 1903 that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company accepted a large block of land for irrigation purposes, and even then this block only extended a short way east of Brooks.¹¹⁰

Canadian Pacific policy with regard to the sale of its lands drew a mixed reaction from the papers. In the case of agricultural land, the papers were never critical of the company's prices and when a reduction of one dollar an acre was introduced in 1892 the Times commented that:

The C.P.R. is acting wisely in reducing the price of its lands. Not only the company, but the whole Northwest, will profit by the change: the company in largely increased sales and an increase of business for its railway, the Northwest in the increase of settlement and the consequent investment of capital.¹¹¹

By an agreement of June 6, 1882 the Canadian Pacific Railway Company had sold to the Canada Northwest Land Company the area of all town

107. Medicine Hat Times, July 16, 1887.

108. Medicine Hat News, September 6, 1894.

109. Ibid., September 12, 1895.

110. J. B. Hedges, op. cit., p. 58, 170.

111. Medicine Hat Times, January 21, 1892.

and village sites established on the main line between Brandon and the boundary of British Columbia. These townsites, of which Medicine Hat was one, were to be managed by a board of trustees named by the railway and land company, with the proceeds to be divided equally between the two companies.¹¹² From the beginning there were complaints about the prices charged for lots. By 1887 the tax-free status of the unsold lots was being challenged. In exasperation the editor wrote that "what we object to is the ghouls that have perched on the non-taxable lots waiting for an opportunity to benefit by the industry of the people."¹¹³ Regina would appear to have been the leader of the movement to get the Northwest Land Company to pay taxes on its unsold property, for it reached a settlement with the company in 1887. Medicine Hat does not seem to have reached an agreement until 1889, because, not being incorporated, it was the school board with the support of the paper that had to undertake the fight.¹¹⁴ In this connection it should be mentioned that in 1894 the News was supporting the Territorial movement to compel the railways to pay what was considered to be their fair share towards the support of municipal institutions.¹¹⁵

112. J. B. Hedges, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

113. Medicine Hat Times, August 27, 1887.

114. Ibid., August 17, 1889.

115. Medicine Hat News, October 3, 1895.

An area of particular interest concerning the relationship between the railway and Medicine Hat involves the ranching industry. Considering the importance of ranching in the Medicine Hat area, it is noteworthy that relatively little friction ever developed between the papers and the railway in this connection. The officials of the Canadian Pacific appear to have recognized the importance of ranching and in most cases to have given at least adequate service to the ranchers. The first large-scale cattle shipments from Medicine Hat occurred in 1884 and consisted of Montana herds driven over the prairie to Medicine Hat. By 1888 shipments had reached an impressive volume with over ninety carloads, containing over fifteen hundred head of cattle, shipped in the first half of September alone.¹¹⁶

In 1886 a trainmaster by the name of Hector McKay was criticized in several editorials for suggesting that the Montana cattle should be driven to Maple Creek rather than Medicine Hat for shipment. The reason for the preference appears to have been that there were sixty-five miles of hard grades on the railway between Medicine Hat and Maple Creek.¹¹⁷ The relatively easier trail to Medicine Hat, or the paper's criticism, apparently resolved the problem in favor of Medicine Hat, for the issue was never revived.

116. Medicine Hat Times, September 14, 1888.

117. Ibid., September 11, 1886.

Another problem which the railway company quickly solved, when it was brought forcibly to its attention, was that of range cattle killed by trains. In 1889 the editor indignantly wrote:

At first the owners endeavored to secure payment from the officers of the road, but in every case were unsuccessful, and not feeling inclined to incur the expense of a prolonged lawsuit, abandoned their efforts....Although we recognize and appreciate the advantages granted to this country by the construction of the great trans-continental line, we cannot always quietly submit to having our capital destroyed before our very eyes, and be unable to obtain any recompense.¹¹⁸

As a result of the publicity given the matter by the paper, and the legal action launched by a prominent stockgrower and backed by the other ranchers of the district, the railway company instituted a policy of compensation for stock killed along the line. On the motion of N. F. Davin, the member for Western Assiniboia, the Dominion Parliament passed a bill in 1891 requiring railways to erect fences along their lines in settled areas or to accept liability for death or injury to stock.¹¹⁹ The fact that complaints ceased two years prior to the passing of this act clearly indicates the efforts which the Canadian Pacific must have been making to solve the problems which it created for the industries on which its future livelihood depended.

118. Medicine Hat Times, January 25, 1889.

119. Ibid., July 2, 1891.

By far the most serious problem which the railways created for the ranching industry was that of prairie fires. Although fires were on occasion started by lightning, careless travellers and freighters, the most serious cause was sparks from railway engines. Not only did the fires destroy the cured grasses on which the cattle and sheep depended for their winter pasturage, they also destroyed the ability of the soil to produce future crops. The prairie soil, when robbed of its covering of grass and shrubs, rapidly lost its moisture and became so hardened by the action of the sun that it was unable to absorb what moisture did fall. An early measure adopted by the Canadian Pacific to solve this problem was that of burning a strip of grass on either side of the track. This, however, too often caused what it was intended to avoid. By 1889 the Times was demanding plowed fire guards¹²⁰ and the Northwest Assembly had passed a resolution requesting the Dominion government to pass an Act "compelling railway companies to plow a fire break eight feet wide, two hundred feet from the track...on uncultivated land, and to burn the prairie grass between the track and the break."¹²¹ In April of 1890, over two-thirds of a flock of two thousand two hundred sheep belonging to the Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company were destroyed by a prairie fire started by a spark from a Canadian

120. Medicine Hat Times, September 6, 1889.

121. Ibid., October 31, 1889.

Pacific engine.¹²² This resulted in a strongly worded demand for action. The following week a bill was introduced in the Senate by Sir John Abbott, which gave the railway companies power to enter unoccupied land to plow fire breaks.¹²³ Two months later the editor of the Times wrote:

The action of the C.P.R. in plowing fireguards along each side of their track between here and Swift Current is worthy of praise, and shows that they are alive to both their own interests and that of the settlers. We understand that this experiment---for it is merely that---was decided on at the urgent request of Superintendent Niblock. If successful the company will probably plow firebreaks along the whole of the prairie section of their lines.¹²⁴

That the experiment was a success is best indicated by the fact that Parliament, on the motion of N. F. Davin, later passed a bill compelling railway companies to maintain firebreaks on both sides of their tracks in the prairie region.¹²⁵

Insofar as railway development was part of the National Policy, the Medicine Hat papers tended to support the general aims of the policy. To them, railways encouraged settlement and the development of the resources of the Northwest, and such development had their wholehearted support. The monopoly clause, though, seemed to them to be an anomaly. It was considered unnecessary as a means of preventing American lines drawing off traffic from the Canadian Pacific

122. Medicine Hat Times, April 24, 1890.

123. Ibid., May 1, 1890.

124. Ibid., July 3, 1890.

125. Ibid., June 19, 1891.

main line, as the tariff would serve to prevent much of an expansion of trade across the border. At the same time the monopoly clause impeded rapid development of some Northwest resources. Although the Times and News favored any reduction of freight rates, they did not think that such reductions should be allowed to damage the financial strength of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The News even supported relatively higher local rates if these enabled the railway to compete successfully with American roads for through traffic. On the other hand, there is a clear indication that they, like other Northwest papers, resented any suggestion of advantage the railway policy or any other aspect of the National Policy might have given eastern interests, at the expense of western interests.

CHAPTER III

WESTERN ASPIRATIONS

In defining the National Policy, R. C. Brown said:

The National Policy...is usually taken to encompass a domestic policy of economic nationalism based on railway building, immigration and settlement, and protective tariffs....But the spirit of the National Policy went much deeper than railways, immigrants and tariffs. Beneath these external manifestations was the will to build and maintain a separate Canadian nation on the North American continent.¹

The policies which were to "build and maintain" this "separate Canadian nation," however, were initially designed by politicians representing only four of the Canadian provinces. The policies, therefore, reflected the needs and aspirations of those provinces only. Increasingly, as these policies succeeded in building the nation, the newly-created sections demanded a voice in the formulation of policy. Their inability to realize what they considered their legitimate aspirations created frustrations which all too often appeared to be the fault of a distant and unresponsive central government.

With the tariff of 1879 the comprehensive pattern of the National Policy was complete: a transcontinental railway, protective tariffs, land settlement policy, the promotion of immigration.

1. R. C. Brown, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

Basic to this whole program was the agricultural development of the west, and its wheat was to become the new staple to which this trans-continental economy was geared. It was to be the means of attracting capital and immigrants and of creating a mass market for the materials and manufactured products of the other regions of the Dominion. Often, however, these policies which originated in the east appeared to neglect the seemingly legitimate needs and even rights of the citizens in the west. Insofar as these policies imposed an inferior economic or social status upon westerners they tended to bring the whole concept of the National Policy into disrepute and resulted in agitation for increased local autonomy, as well as a stronger voice in the national government.

A particularly revealing editorial appeared in the Times during the federal election campaign of 1891. In describing the attributes he would desire in a candidate and the policies a western member should pursue once elected, the editor clearly showed the frustration so often summed up in the comment:

...it is the desire of the people of these territories to develop this part of the country, and if the people in the east were true to their own interests they would see the utter folly of placing stumbling blocks in the way of the Northwest.²

Drinnan wrote that the member for Western Assiniboia:

2. Medicine Hat Times, May 7, 1887.

...should be in the fullest sense of the term a Northwest man. On every question affecting this country he should sink party entirely out of sight and stand up boldly for our rights, for if ever we are to receive fair play at the hands of the Government it must be through the Northwest members. The Northwest, owing to its isolated position has interests at variance with the more populous east, and unless our members fight, and fight hard, for these rights they are likely to be ignored.³

In enumerating these interests and rights the editor combined the need for more railway construction, a more liberal immigration policy, and reciprocity with the United States with another set of needs which held equal priority in his eyes if the west was to develop its full potential. These included the demand for responsible government, especially in respect to the control of territorial funds, and the right to deal with the liquor question locally. This list could well have been extended to include such later questions as the place of the French language in the territories and their right to determine the nature of their educational system without having to consider the prejudices of Ontario and Quebec.

As early as 1887 a letter to the editor appeared which echoed the feelings he so often expressed:

We would ask our Eastern friends to regard us as fellow Canadians who are prone to claim that they form a part of this great Dominion, and not as

3. Medicine Hat Times, February 12, 1891.

serfs....Do not look upon us as a selfish, unsatisfied people who want the world, but rather as a people who are struggling for those rights and liberties so dear to themselves. Assist us in getting them and time will prove that not only the Northwest but the whole Dominion will be benefitted thereby.⁴

In 1891, with patience running a little thin, the editor wrote: "the Dominion Government has spent millions in setting up its older provinces and the youngest on the list is certainly entitled to similar treatment."⁵ The growth of this feeling, that the Northwest Territories occupied what virtually amounted to a colonial status with regard to the eastern provinces, gradually weakened the enthusiasm of the Medicine Hat papers for the concept of the National Policy and the party whose program it was. It is in this respect that it is essential to consider these issues, for inasmuch as they affected the attitude of the Medicine Hat papers toward the policies of the federal government, they were an indication of the failure of that government to adequately work out the specific details of their policy for the development of western Canada.

In the period before 1885, the purchase of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company, the pacification of the Indians through the introduction of the North-West Mounted Police, and the opening of the Northwest to settlement as a result of the Indian Treaties, the survey and the railway, were important developments resulting from the adoption of various aspects of the National Policy. Much, however, remained to be done.

4. Medicine Hat Times, May 28, 1887.

5. Ibid., February 12, 1891.

The rebellion of 1885 showed clearly the various interests affecting the Northwest: the problems of the Indians and Half-breeds in coming to terms with the changed conditions facing them, the desire of the settlers in the west for law and order, and the inability of English and French Canadians in eastern Canada to bury their long-standing feud in the interests of promoting western development. The political ramifications in the east of the suppression of the rebellion and the execution of Louis Riel complicated the language and school questions in the west for many years. In addition, it brought no better understanding, either in the east or the west, of the problems facing the Half-breeds and the Indians.

In 1893 an article in the Medicine Hat Times referred to the end of the great Buffalo herds of the plains. The article ended with the following:

1883 was the last year of the buffalo. A herd numbering perhaps 80,000 crossed the Yellowstone river in that year and "they never came back" is the pitiful refrain which one hears from the Indians along the border from Winnipeg in Manitoba to St. Mary's Lakes in Alberta.⁶

Two years later in a reprint in the News from the North American Review the following comment was made:

The game of the west has rapidly disappeared before the huntsman's rifle....This might seem like cruelty

6. Medicine Hat Times, June 8, 1893.

and wasteful extravagance, but the buffalo like the Indian, stood in the way of progress and civilization, and the decree had gone forth that they must give way. It was impossible to herd domestic stock in a country where they were constantly liable to be stampeded by the moving herds of wild animals.⁷

Although the extreme animosity towards the Indians which characterized the settlement of the American west never developed in the Canadian Northwest, a similar lack of appreciation for the problems faced by the Indians was often in evidence. With the passing of the buffalo, their nomadic way of life became impossible. Unable to survive by hunting, and finding it difficult to settle down to agricultural pursuits on a reservation, many Indians turned to rustling or, attracted to the new communities, picked up a scant livelihood on the fringes of the white man's civilization. As a result, friction often occurred between the settlers on the one hand, and the Indians or their guardian, the federal Indian Department, on the other.

The most basic and persistent demand of the white settlers and stockmen was that Indians should be kept on their reserves. Stealing of cattle and horses was a major problem by 1886, and was the motivation for an editorial on the demands of the stockmen in the Medicine Hat area. The editor pointed out that Indians were preventing the speedy settlement of the west by their depredations. In order to

7. Medicine Hat News, December 19, 1895.

prevent that unhappy state of affairs, the stockmen demanded that the government keep the natives on their reserves and allow trustworthy Indians to leave only with a pass issued by the Agent on the reserve. Also, all Indian cattle and horses on the reserves were to be branded and recorded so that stolen animals, which would not be recorded, could easily be identified. Armour indicated his opinion in the matter by adding, "as these are the views of practical men engaged in ranching, they should have considerable influence with the Government in shaping legislation affecting stockmen."⁸ A few months later another aspect of the question was discussed in the pages of the Times. The burden of that editorial was:

It would relieve the Government of a good deal of unfair criticism, if they would take steps to hold the Indians on their reserves. Travellers passing through the country and seeing these wretched creatures gathering up, and eating ravenously, the scraps and offal from every back door, naturally blame the Government for not feeding them, while the fact is the Indians are to blame for not stopping where the rations are.⁹

The Indians, he claimed, preferred the diversion of getting near civilization, and catching what they could in the way of sustenance, to remaining on the reserves. By keeping the Indians there the government would have done them a favor and relieved itself and the

8. Medicine Hat Times, January 14, 1886.

9. Ibid., April 22, 1886.

country of a considerable amount of unfavorable publicity in which travellers, who did not understand the circumstances, were prone to indulge.¹⁰

In 1885 the ranchers had demanded a more efficient system of North-West Mounted Police patrols and a closer supervision of the border with Montana.¹¹ Apparently their demand was met, as the detachment in Medicine Hat was increased from thirty men to fifty by the end of the year.¹² Just as this increased force was beginning to become effective a rumor reached Medicine Hat that the force at that point was to be reduced to six men. The proposed reduction was immediately and vociferously protested. It was pointed out that the region from the head of the Cypress Hills to the mouth of the Big Bow river was the gateway from the Canadian Northwest to Montana. If that exit were inadequately guarded, it would be an open invitation to horse thieves, both Indian and white, to practise their "nefarious art." The policy of concentrating the Mounted Police at Regina appeared to the people of Medicine Hat as a case of favoritism and prevented the police from doing their job efficiently.¹³ A further editorial on the subject insisted that a force was necessary that could follow and capture horse and cattle thieves and mete out

10. Medicine Hat Times, April 22, 1886.

11. Ibid., November 5, 1885.

12. Ibid., November 26, 1885.

13. Ibid., April 2, 1887.

justice in such doses as would set a good example for either whites or Indians who had any inclinations towards lawlessness. If such action was not forthcoming it was intimated that the citizens would provide such a service themselves in the form of a "vigilance committee."¹⁴ In the spring of 1888 the Times reported that as a result of its pleas and the petition to the federal government by the Board of Trade, efficient police patrols on the frontier had prevented cattle and horse stealing for almost a year.¹⁵ Apparently the patrols had also managed to recover most of the horses that had been run off in early 1887 in the Medicine Hat area.¹⁶ The Annual Report of the North-West Mounted Police for 1888 also indicated that the patrol system had wiped out horse stealing almost completely and that in the next year the patrol system would be increased.¹⁷

The very success of the system of police patrols, however, soon resulted in demands by eastern members of Parliament for a reduction of the number of men in the force. Edgar Dewdney, in May of 1892, proposed that the force should gradually be reduced; the opposition demanded a sweeping reduction. In a strongly worded editorial Drinnan pointed out that:

14. Medicine Hat Times, April 16, 1887.

15. Ibid., April 12, 1888.

16. J. P. Turner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 362.

17. From the Annual Report of the North-West Mounted Police reported in the Medicine Hat Times, February 23, 1889.

A few years ago, before the present admirable system of patrolling the boundary line and the ranching country was commenced by the police, the white and Indian stock thieves were a constant menace to ranchers, and numbers of stockmen were dissuaded from going into business in this country on this account.¹⁸

The editorial further pointed out that even with the whole ranch country patrolled, Indians still killed a large number of cattle each year and that the withdrawal of even one patrol would have proved disastrous to interests which had been created on the assumption that adequate police protection would be maintained. Consequently the editor claimed:

It is about time members of the Dominion House who attempt to discuss Northwest subjects and take a leading part in legislating for this country, informed themselves about its wants and the conditions existing here. Ignorant legislation in matters pertaining to the Northwest has done and is doing more than anything else to retard its growth.¹⁹

As a result of the strong representations of western communities and an outbreak of cattle killing by Indians the patrol system was increased rather than reduced.²⁰

From the time that reserves were set apart for the Indians in the Northwest, the police had made a practice of returning wandering Indians to the custody of the Indian Agents. This system, whereby Indians were only allowed off the reserve with a pass, had worked to the satisfaction of the settlers, if not the natives. In 1893,

18. Medicine Hat Times, June 2, 1892.

19. Ibid.

20. From the Annual Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police reported in the Medicine Hat Times, March 9, 1893.

however, the Indian Department made the discovery that according to the treaties the Indians were permitted freedom of movement. Upon this discovery, the North-West Mounted Police were instructed not to interfere with their movements. As the Indians had quietly acquiesced in this practice in the past, the Times strongly censured the government for being overly hasty in complying with the letter of its treaty obligations. The Indians, without some restriction, were certain to gravitate to the settlements and there get into mischief, and without the means of assistance available on the reserves were likely to return to the practice of running off cattle and horses as they felt the desire. Drinnan pointed out that it was unreasonable to expect settlers to forebear when they saw a band of Indians running off their property and that conflicts were almost certain to ensue in which blood would be shed. He hoped that the good sense which had been a characteristic of the government's management of the Indians would prevail and that something would be done immediately to prevent trouble arising between them and the settlers.²¹ These new instructions to the police would probably not have resulted in such strong criticism if it had not been for a particularly blatant case of rustling about a week before they became known. Apparently a band of about seven treaty Indians from the Blackfoot reserve had camped on the land of the Canada Coal,

21. Medicine Hat Times, June 22, 1893.

Agricultural and Colonization Company at Stair. After slaughtering a herd of antelope that were grazing there they were believed to have run off about twenty head of horses. Although later captured and tried they were acquitted and released. As few people believed they were innocent, it was felt that keeping the Indians on the reserves would prevent future problems of this nature.²²

Although often a source of trouble, the Indians were not always reviled. Their existence was the source of considerable government expenditure in the Northwest. They provided a justification for the maintenance of the North-West Mounted Police, provisions for both the Indians and police were purchased in the Northwest after 1887 and their treaty money was a welcome source of income to local merchants. In 1888 there was even a proposal by a Rev. E. F. Wilson, of the Church of England, to build a residential school, similar to ones then in operation at Elkhorn and Sault Ste. Marie, for the education of Indian children. As Medicine Hat would benefit from the construction and operation of an institution for eighty pupils it received wholehearted local support. When repeated promises of assistance by the government fell through, there was considerable resentment of what was considered to be federal shortsightedness. As the government was aiding the other two schools throughout this period, the refusal to aid the Medicine Hat project appeared to be a case of sectional favoritism.²³

22. Medicine Hat Times, June 15, 1893, June 22, 1893, July 6, 1893, and July 20, 1893.

23. Ibid., August 27, 1891.

Early in 1886 reports appeared in eastern papers of the possibility of an uprising by the Crees and Blackfeet.²⁴ Even though the people of Medicine Hat did not give much credence to the reports, they welcomed the suggestion of General Sir Fredrick Middleton that a military demonstration be made in the west "in order to impress the Indians with the power and strength of the whites."²⁵ The hope was that such a movement of troops to the west might result in an influx of money and some of the troops returning as settlers.²⁶ This enthusiasm quickly evaporated, however, when a number of ranchers pointed out that the Indians might protest the arrival of the troops by setting fire to the prairie.²⁷ It was with some relief then, that they learned that the project had been abandoned.

With the exception of the perennial problem of rustling, for which the Indians may have received more than their fair share of blame, there appears to have been general approval for the government's Indian policy. By 1888 the Times was reporting that "the Indians have made wonderful progress in agricultural pursuits during the past few years,"²⁸ and that all danger of an Indian uprising was past. In a report on the progress of the Northwest in 1895, the News reported:

24. Medicine Hat Times, January 14, 1886.

25. Ibid., February 4, 1886.

26. Ibid., March 11, 1886.

27. Ibid., March 18, 1886.

28. Ibid., March 1, 1888.

One of the triumphs of the Canadian Government has been its success with the aboriginal inhabitants. It found them savages, with not the remotest idea of civilized methods. A brief examination of the Indian reports will show that within fifteen years it has transformed them into farmers, who till and reap with profit to themselves and advantage to the country. The paternal system has been kindly and humane. It has rendered the Territories habitable for the whites, and has founded in them comfortable homes for the original occupiers.²⁹

Although overly optimistic as to the future of the plains Indians in the developing white society of the west, the report does indicate the general satisfaction of the Medicine Hat area with the progress of the Indians. Two months later, in a report of the Territorial Fair, reprinted from the Nor'Wester, particular attention was given to the progress of the Indians in the field of agriculture.³⁰

In order to prevent the problems which occurred in the western United States when white settlers came into conflict with the native inhabitants of the plains, the North-West Mounted Police Force was established in 1873. This force was to stop the liquor traffic and teach the Indians respect for the law while acquainting them with the great changes in their way of life that would result from the coming of white settlers to the west. With minor exceptions, this aspect of the government's policy always received the ready support of the papers in Medicine Hat. In fact, eastern Patrons and Liberals were strongly criticized by the Medicine Hat News for their lack of support for the North-West Mounted Police in 1895,³¹

29. Medicine Hat News, June 13, 1895.

30. Ibid., August 15, 1895.

31. Ibid., February 7, 1895 and February 21, 1895.

and the government was reminded of the necessity of maintaining the strength of the force in 1896.³² Over the years numerous articles appeared in the papers praising the work of the force with both Indians and whites, and comparing the peaceful state of affairs in Canada with the less favorable situation in the western states of the United States.³³ Even the widespread criticism of Commissioner L. W. Herchmer in most of the papers of the Northwest failed to gain any appreciable support in Medicine Hat. The demand by N. F. Davin for an investigation of the conduct of Herchmer was only supported in the Times because the editor felt that the constant criticism of the commander of the force was undermining its discipline and efficiency.³⁴ When the report of the commission under Mr. Justice Wetmore was released the Times simply commented that "while some of the charges have been proven, the report as a whole is rather favorable to the Commissioner."³⁵ In connection with the extremely unpopular liquor permit system, the Times appeared to be rather sympathetic to the police who had the unfortunate duty of having to enforce it.³⁶ The November 16, 1893 edition of the Medicine Hat Times carried the following comment: "You are made to realize that you are in a land of order, and that your person and property are under the care of the

32. Medicine Hat News, January 16, 1896.

33. Medicine Hat Times, November 2, 1888 and Medicine Hat News, November 29, 1894.

34. Medicine Hat Times, December 5, 1889.

35. Ibid., March 9, 1893.

36. Ibid., March 29, 1888.

commonwealth. Too many (American) communities are fast relapsing into that barbarism in which private revenge becomes the miserable substitute for public justice."

iii

Canadians, as inheritors of the British concept of democracy, have always been prone to claim their "rights." The federal system of government adopted in Canada in 1867 recognized that the various areas of the nation could legitimately have different and often conflicting interests. Shortly after Rupert's Land was ceded to the Dominion, provision was made in the Manitoba Act for a form of territorial administration.³⁷ The form of government which existed in the Territories when the Medicine Hat Times began publication, however, was not laid down until 1875, when the North-West Territories Act was passed.³⁸ Although the Act provided for the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor and a council of five, its most important innovation was the provision made for the progressive introduction of elected members to the council. When the elected members reached twenty-one, the council was to be transformed into a legislative assembly. By 1884 the elected members of the Territorial Council outnumbered the appointed members, but the Medicine Hat area did not yet have a representative.

37. Statutes of Canada, 33 Vic., C. 3 (1870).

38. Ibid., 38 Vic., C. 49 (1875).

Even though Medicine Hat viewed itself as one of the more important communities in the Territories, representation by an elected member seemed slow in coming. In July of 1886 a public meeting in Medicine Hat requested that a new electoral district, taking in the area from Swift Current to Medicine Hat, be formed.³⁹ This request was turned down by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney as there was to be a rearrangement of the boundaries of the electoral districts at the next session of the Northwest Council and such a constituency might not fit the new electoral map.⁴⁰ Notwithstanding the fact that Medicine Hat was not yet represented, the Times strongly endorsed the appointment of a delegation by the Council to bring to the attention of the Dominion authorities the fact that "the time had come when the Territories should be placed under a system of local self-government similar to that enjoyed by the Provinces."⁴¹ To be deprived of their rights as British subjects because they had the courage to attempt to develop a new section of the Dominion seemed unfair. There was, even at this stage, a strong feeling that the eastern politicians were incapable of comprehending the needs of the west. The next year, 1887, brought a renewal of these twin demands, representation for Medicine Hat and responsible government for the Territories. The demand for representation took on

39. Medicine Hat Times, July 15, 1886.

40. Ibid., August 5, 1886.

41. Ibid., November 27, 1886.

added urgency, though, as Medicine Hat began to realize that its interests were not being considered by the council on which it remained unrepresented. At the close of the session of 1887 the editor wrote:

The elected members seemed powerless to shake themselves free of that feeling that each of their especial districts should have everything, regardless of what other districts were justly entitled to. Medicine Hat has but little to thank the council for. When any matter interesting us did happen to come before them, not a man could see over the fence of his own local preserve to say a word in our behalf. Truly we were "nobody's child."⁴²

In 1888 Medicine Hat received the right to elect a member to the new Northwest Assembly provided for by the revised North-West Territories Act.⁴³ Although the Act established a representative assembly, it provided for an advisory council rather than an executive responsible to the assembly. This led immediately to a memorial being sent to Ottawa by the Assembly, requesting "full responsible government" for the Territories, "with the exception of the power to raise money on the public credit."⁴⁴ It also called attention to the fact that no responsible body existed to prepare legislation and requested that the Assembly have control of all money voted by the Dominion government for expenditure in the Territories. At the first session of the Assembly in

42. Medicine Hat Times, November 24, 1887.

43. Statutes of Canada, 51 Vic., c. 19 (1888).

44. Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories, 1888, pp. 105-106.

October of 1888, the Lieutenant-Governor, both in the general tenor of his speech from the throne and his readiness to concede to them the full control of the Dominion grant, led the people to believe he was in full accord with their demands for responsible government. By the end of the 1889 session the situation appeared to have changed and Drinnan wrote:

...during the recent session of the Assembly it was ascertained that the Lieutenant-Governor has withdrawn nearly all the concessions he had made [during the previous session]. The people, having enjoyed the sweets of self government, were to submit to a system infinitely worse than the one which had, owing to their condemnation, been superceded. Notwithstanding the emphatic protests of the Assembly and the press of the country against such retrogression, this would-be autocrat persisted in his refusal to place before the representatives of the people an account of how large a portion of the public funds had been spent.⁴⁵

A number of suggestions were made from different parts of the Territories about the best solution to the impasse between the Lieutenant-Governor and the Assembly which had resulted from the vague wording of the Dominion Act. Most of these suggestions centered around the grant of provincial status for part or all of the Territories. Early in 1888 the Winnipeg Free Press had suggested that the Territories should be divided into three provinces. It was pointed out that had they been portions of the

45. Medicine Hat Times, December 5, 1889.

United States, they would have already been in possession of separate responsible governments. Dakota had become a separate territory when it had a population of ten thousand, while the Northwest Territories still did not enjoy responsible government with a population of over forty-nine thousand. The Territories, it pointed out:

...have already suffered seriously from the inability of the Eastern Provinces to comprehend the wants of the west....The great immediate and future development of Canada must take place in this great western portion. If it is to go on unchecked by eastern prejudices, selfishness, and ignorance the west must have a rapidly increasing representation at Ottawa, and to that end, the sooner there is a number of Provinces in the west to balance those in the east the better for all of Canada.⁴⁶

While the Times was not prepared to support the division of the Territories into provinces immediately, it insisted that the Assembly must have complete control over the Dominion grant to the Territories and the right to elect an advisory board which they could hold responsible for all executive acts. Without those concessions, the Times promised to continue to agitate for those rights which were the due of every British subject.⁴⁷

The disagreement over the control of Territorial funds was doubtless rendered more bitter by the general opinion which was held of Lieutenant-Governor Royal by the people of the Northwest.

46. Medicine Hat Times, April 5, 1888.

47. Ibid., December 5, 1889.

In 1886 the Times had accused him of being the correspondent in Nouveau Monde who "hurled coarse epithets" at members of the expeditionary force.⁴⁸ In 1888 the rumor that he had been appointed brought a comment from the editor that he hardly believed the government would appoint the only man who had received such opposition at the hands of the press and the people. He objected to Royal not only because of his unsavory political record but also on the grounds of his nationality. The editor concluded with the statement that "his unpopularity throughout the west amounts to intense dislike if not to actual hatred."⁴⁹ The feelings of the Assembly toward the Lieutenant-Governor were shown equally clearly at the proroguing of the session of 1889. The Lieutenant-Governor read the members "a homily of their duty to their country and [their duty] to educate the people to obey the law." As he left the members applauded and sang the "Pirate King."⁵⁰ In 1894 the Medicine Hat News quoted the editor of the Calgary Herald as saying:

The whole of his official life in the Northwest was one long effort to suppress the independent feelings of this portion of the Dominion....His domineering way of managing matters disgusted every one who had anything to do with him.⁵¹

48. Medicine Hat Times, January 14, 1886.

49. Ibid., March 1, 1888.

50. Ibid., November 28, 1889.

51. Medicine Hat News, March 22, 1894.

The agitation for responsible government increased markedly during the 1889 session of the Assembly and did not abate until the passing of the Amending North-West Territories Act in August of 1891.⁵² A banquet held at Medicine Hat in 1889 to honor the visiting Minister of the Interior provided a platform for Thomas Tweed, the local member of the Northwest Assembly, to point out that:

The time was ripe for the introduction of responsible government into the Territories. Manitoba received responsible government when it had only 17,000 of a population, British Columbia when it had 12,000. The Northwest had nearly 100,000.⁵³

In 1890 the Times asserted that by abolishing the Assembly's control over revenue the Lieutenant-Governor took upon himself the power to decide whether or not to implement its ordinances and thereby rendered the Assembly useless;⁵⁴ in 1891 the paper asserted that the press and people of the Territories were almost unanimous in condemning the existing system of government and in demanding a much fuller measure of responsible government.⁵⁵ The passing of the North-West Territories Act of 1891 brought an end to most of the agitation. On receipt of a synopsis of the proposed bill Drinnan wrote that "this Bill...will give to the Northwest nearly everything asked for by the Assembly, and it should satisfy the people for some

52. Statutes of Canada, 54-55 Vic., C. 22 (1891).

53. Medicine Hat Times, September 6, 1889.

54. Ibid., December 11, 1890.

55. Ibid., May 28, 1891.

time to come."⁵⁶ By transferring to the Northwest Assembly, from its own hands or those of the Lieutenant-Governor, such thorny issues as the allocation of funds in the Territories, control of the liquor question and provisions respecting the use of the French language, the Dominion government made possible a far greater spirit of co-operation between the two levels of government engaged in the development of western Canada. Although complete responsible government was not accorded to the Northwest until 1897,⁵⁷ the Act of 1891 had produced a sufficient measure of satisfaction for the much villified Lieutenant-Governor Royal to leave on a note of relative harmony with the Assembly. In his last address to that body, his claim that the Territories were then enjoying "a measure of peace and prosperity unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any other portion of the Dominion of Canada," as a result of the changes that had been made, was heartily seconded by the applause of the members.⁵⁸ Thus, an issue which had produced so much discord between the federal government and the people of the Territories was removed, enabling them to work toward the basic goal of the National Policy in much greater harmony.

56. Medicine Hat Times, July 9, 1891.

57. Statutes of Canada, 60-61 Vic., C. 28 (1896-97).

58. Medicine Hat Times, September 21, 1893.

Although the Medicine Hat Times criticized or even expressed outright opposition to many specific actions of the government, it appears generally to have favored the Conservative government of Sir John A. Macdonald. In the period after his death, however, there appeared a growing feeling that the Conservatives had lost their sense of direction. Notwithstanding the fact that there were many solid achievements in the development of the west during the period from 1891 to 1896, the vision and vitality of the National Policy seemed to fade without his presence. The rapid changes in leadership, corruption, and finally the Manitoba school question with its implications for the Northwest, eroded western support. By the time the Medicine Hat News commenced publication in 1894 there was a large increase in Liberal sympathy. When the Liberal candidate withdrew from the election campaign of 1896, however, the News, while still critical of Davin, did not come out strongly in favor of the Patron candidate as did many Liberal papers. The somewhat cynical manner in which the News reported Davin's victory though, when the Returning Officer cast the deciding vote, indicated clearly where the editor's sympathies lay.⁵⁹

Medicine Hat received representation in the Dominion Parliament, as part of the riding of Western Assiniboia in 1887, a year before it was granted the same privilege in the Assembly of the Northwest Territories. In the case of federal representation the agitation

59. Medicine Hat News, July 16, 1896 and March 29, 1888.

in Manitoba and the rebellion of 1885, rather than any benevolent feeling among eastern legislators, appear to have achieved the desired goal. In March of 1884 a convention of the Manitoba and North-West Farmer's Union had met to discuss western grievances. A resolution was passed bluntly warning prospective settlers to stay away from the Northwest until its wrongs were righted.⁶⁰ Although Macdonald felt that poor crops, high duties on reapers, early frosts and a railway to Hudson's Bay were "stuff for elections not revolts,"⁶¹ he failed to see that the unrest was not confined to the white settlers of Manitoba. The rebellion of 1885, therefore, had a profound effect on his view of western demands. Recognition of this change was implicit in a Times article of 1886 which stated that the federal government refused a Northwest Representation bill twice in 1884 and once in 1885 as "premature;" soon after, however, it became "expedient"---right after the rebellion of 1885.⁶² Whatever benefit the Grits might have derived from the tardiness of Conservative action on this question was lost when several of their leaders continued their opposition to the bill right up to its final passage.⁶³

60. Donald Creighton, op. cit., V. II, p. 379.

61. Ibid., p. 385.

62. Medicine Hat Times, October 9, 1886.

63. Ibid., October 9, 1886.

Just before Western Assiniboia elected its first member to the House of Commons, B. J. McMahon explained why he felt this representation was so essential:

The present government has not done all they might for the Northwest. But perhaps this does not come from an intention to neglect the interests of the country as much as from a failure to comprehend the needs of the Northwest.

Of course, now that the Territories will have representation, we expect to see this state of affairs greatly changed, for the men who are sent to Ottawa from this country will know the needs of the people. Legislation which would be beneficial to eastern provinces would be of no use to the Territories.⁶⁴

Before the campaign got under way, the Times deplored the moves being made to form political associations in the Territories. The editor felt that the new member should be elected to represent the Territories, not a party.⁶⁵ McMahon indicated that there was no man more cognizant of the wants of the people of the Territories and more capable of urging them on Parliament than Mr. Thomas Tweed.⁶⁶ When Nicholas Flood Davin received the Conservative nomination, however, the editor began to urge the Liberals and dissatisfied Conservatives to bring out a candidate. After printing a tirade against Davin the editor continued.

64. Medicine Hat Times, January 15, 1887.

65. Ibid., February 18, 1886.

66. Ibid., June 17, 1886.

The Times is independent in politics. Had the proper man been nominated by the Conservatives he should have had our hearty support. If the Liberals bring forward the right man we may be counted upon to support him. Otherwise we remain neutral, reserving the right to criticize where we may deem it our duty as a journalist to do so.⁶⁷

Although McMahon objected to Davin as a political adventurer, the more basic reason for refusing to support him would appear to have been the fear that Medicine Hat's interests might be ignored. Davin came from the eastern end of the constituency which depended almost entirely on its agricultural resources, while Medicine Hat depended on its stock and coal industries for development.⁶⁸ Immediately after Davin's election to the House of Commons, McMahon retired, "due to illness," and the paper ceased its more blatant criticism of the new member.

During the first session of the new parliament which opened in 1887, the Times carried the following editorial on the new member:

Mr. Davin is a new member, but in less than a week he has forced the older parliamentarians to open their sleepy eyes....We think that Liberals and Conservatives alike should feel proud that they are so ably represented by a man, untiring in his work, eloquent in his oratory, and successful in his undertakings. That Mr. Davin will continue to rise in the estimation of his constituents...we can entertain no doubt. So far, we are more than proud of Nicholas Flood Davin.⁶⁹

67. Medicine Hat Times, December 4, 1886.

68. Ibid., May 6, 1886.

69. Ibid., April 23, 1887.

This unstinting praise did not long endure. By July his support for disallowance came under fire;⁷⁰ by December his stand against commercial union was being questioned;⁷¹ by the end of 1888 his support of open voting in the Territories was strongly criticized.⁷² In general, however, the Medicine Hat Times continued to support Davin, as the best choice available, until it ceased publication in 1894. In 1891 the Times even suggested Davin as the best man for the position of Minister of the Interior and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs if Dewdney was to be appointed Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. It was felt that these portfolios had already been conceded to the Territories by the appointment of Dewdney in 1888, and that Davin was the logical choice as "in ability he stood head and shoulders above all the other Northwest members."⁷³ Although there was some criticism of Davin over specific issues such as the ones mentioned above and over the lack of public works by the federal government in the western end of the constituency, there appeared to be little opposition to Davin's re-election in 1891. Not until the Medicine Hat News commenced publication in 1894 did a Medicine Hat paper actively question Davin's right to support from that area.

70. Medicine Hat Times, July 9, 1887.

71. Ibid., December 29, 1887.

72. Ibid., December 21, 1888.

73. Ibid., July 2, 1891.

Even then, the most damaging criticism was that he followed the party line too closely and therefore neglected the interests of Western Assiniboia. Also, his vote for Remedial Legislation in the Manitoba school conflict proved to be extremely unpopular not only in Medicine Hat, but throughout the whole constituency.

One rather interesting anomaly in the policy of the Times with regard to federal authority during this period occurred over the Interprovincial Conference of 1887. Why did the Medicine Hat paper take so little interest in the proceedings of a conference dedicated to increasing provincial powers and revenues? The conference was mentioned only once in a brief article taken directly from the wire service. In January of 1888 the Times stated simply:

The premiers have completed their work. After the resolutions of the Interprovincial conference have been adopted in the different provincial legislatures a deputation of provincial premiers will visit England to urge Imperial legislation.⁷⁴

One might have expected that the Times, then avidly engaged in the struggle for responsible government in the Territories, to follow the proceedings with the closest of attention and interest. The most logical explanation for this apparent lack of interest would seem to be a recognition on the part of the paper that the Northwest was almost totally dependent on the federal government, not only for its future development, but for the very rudimentary services which

74. Medicine Hat Times, January 12, 1888.

it then enjoyed. Therefore, while the paper was strongly in favor of increased local control over expenditures, what was actually meant was local control over the expenditure of the funds which it was hoped a benevolent central government would provide.

In addition to requesting increased expenditure on the promotion of immigration to the Northwest and subsidies to western railways, the newspapers of Medicine Hat continually urged the central government to undertake public works which would tend to develop their area. Many of these public works would, in other more settled parts of the country, have normally been left to the local citizens to finance. The attitude is apparent in an editorial written by J. K. Drinnan in 1891 in which he commented that "the Dominion Government has spent millions in setting up its older provinces and the youngest on the list is certainly entitled to similar treatment."⁷⁵

As well as feeling that the federal government was not undertaking sufficient public works in the Territories generally, the editors felt that their locality in particular was being neglected. Early in 1887 an editorial appeared in which it was stated that while the government collected taxes everywhere it spent money only to build buildings and other facilities in Regina. White, the

75. Medicine Hat Times, February 12, 1891.

Minister of the Interior, and other officials were accused of making promises when they went through Medicine Hat and then forgetting them as soon as they had left. That particular editorial concluded with the appeal:

There is far more capital invested in the country surrounding Calgary, Medicine Hat, Macleod, and Maple Creek than there is in the Regina district and surely the Government cannot be ignorant of the fact. Then why not take a greater interest in this country?⁷⁶

Among the items requested by Medicine Hat were a traffic bridge over the South Saskatchewan or failing that a government-operated ferry, a courthouse, a jail, a post office and a land office. Although a ferry had existed from 1884, it was operated by the North-West Mounted Police and therefore the service was discontinued when their barracks was moved to the town from the north side of the river in 1890. The government had sent an engineer to locate a site for a bridge and to prepare an estimate in 1888, at the request of the member for Western Assiniboia.⁷⁷ As nothing further was done, the Times continued to agitate, pointing out that the north side of the river was unlikely to develop until a crossing was available at all seasons of the year. Even though a

76. Medicine Hat Times, January 15, 1887.

77. Ibid., March 8, 1888.

second survey was made in 1894,⁷⁸ the bridge was not built until 1908,⁷⁹ and then by the provincial government.

The Times also indicated that an important community like Medicine Hat should be provided with a courthouse and jail by the federal government. In 1888, at the urging of the Times and the Medicine Hat Board of Trade, Davin had an appropriation placed in the federal estimates to cover their construction.⁸⁰ This appropriation lapsed and nothing more was heard until Davin appeared before the electors again in 1891. As he promised that this would be remedied when Parliament met later that year, the Times was indignant when no mention was made of a grant in the estimates. Because of pressure from Medicine Hat the member prevailed upon the government to include the sum of one thousand dollars in the supplementary estimates to cover the cost of converting the unused immigration shed into a courthouse, a jail and accommodation for the North-West Mounted Police.⁸¹ Although these funds also lapsed, continued pressure resulted in the alterations finally being made in 1892.

Medicine Hat was less successful in obtaining a federally financed post office or land office. Davin promised at each

78. Medicine Hat Times, November 29, 1894.

79. Medicine Hat News, April 7, 1908.

80. Medicine Hat Times, November 7, 1889.

81. Ibid., September 24, 1891.

election that he would see that they were built if he was re-elected. In the case of the post office, the postmaster finally admitted defeat in 1895 and built one himself.⁸² Medicine Hat never did receive a land office while Davin was their representative. An intelligence office was opened in 1888 to advise prospective settlers, but the agent was withdrawn in 1889.

Although the people of Medicine Hat often appeared to feel that they were even more neglected than other western areas, the paper did not completely lose sight of the larger goal of general western development. When the Montreal Star carried the following editorial prior to the election of 1896, the Medicine Hat News reprinted it and strongly endorsed the growing recognition of the west's peculiar problems which it illustrated.

The additional member to be granted the North-West, has no doubt been justly earned, and will appear as a milestone marking the progress of that country. It is well that the prairies should have as loud a voice in Parliament as is consistent with the constitution of that body. The men out there know best why they have not that shining prosperity which would draw immigrants from all parts of the world; and it is to the national interest that they should come to Parliament and say what they think....If it had not been for Mr. Davin, we might often have been in ignorance that the prairies, as such, were represented in Parliament.⁸³

When advising the people how to pick the best candidate in that election, the editor of the News wrote that they should remember

82. Medicine Hat Times, November 21, 1895.

83. Medicine Hat News, January 16, 1896.

that no matter how troublesome, how crooked, and how mixed up and complicated affairs were in eastern Canada, their greatest consideration was the west. If they hoped to promote the future of the west, speaking of the west as a whole, they must send to Ottawa men who knew the west and who were not so servile to a political party that they would betray their most sacred pledges for the sake of reward or for the sake of their party.⁸⁴

Davin's inability to obtain tariff reforms or the public works desired by the Medicine Hat area, coupled with his support of such unpopular Conservative policies as railway disallowance and remedial legislation in respect to Manitoba schools, lost him the support of the Medicine Hat News. At the same time, jealousy of Regina, rather than any failure of the federal Liberal party, was blamed for the withdrawal of the Liberal candidate.⁸⁵ While the shift in sympathy had been very gradual, by the election of 1896 it was unmistakable.

Although the Medicine Hat Times mirrored the desire for representation in a responsible Territorial assembly and in the federal parliament, it led popular opinion in regard to municipal incorporation. While wanting a voice in the councils which could promote the development of the area, the population of Medicine Hat, or at least a significant part of it, did not appear to be prepared to take responsibility for their own development until 1899. At the

84. Medicine Hat News, May 7, 1896.

85. Ibid., May 21, 1896.

root of this problem was the fact that a large portion of the population were railway employees. To them, the development of the community and area was not of great significance. Their incomes and security were determined by factors outside of Medicine Hat. In their minds incorporation meant taxes, not only for local improvements but also to promote development. A Board of Trade had been formed by the merchants in 1887⁸⁶ for these two purposes, but the enthusiasm of the businessmen waned as they realized that they alone were shouldering the financial burden involved and would continue to do so as long as they were willing.⁸⁷ Even though numerous public meetings expressed themselves as favoring incorporation, petitions circulated in 1890, 1891 and 1894 failed to get the signatures of two-thirds of the property owners.⁸⁸ Throughout the period the Times and later the News strongly supported incorporation, noting that the towns that were developing rapidly were those which had incorporated.⁸⁹ Even such dangers as the repeated outbreaks of fever due to lack of sanitation and the threat of a smallpox epidemic, or on the other hand the possibilities of running water, adequate fire protection, a sewage system, and domestic natural gas, failed to budge the opposition.⁹⁰

86. Medicine Hat Times, April 30, 1887.

87. Ibid., September 21, 1888.

88. Ibid., April 3, 1890 and August 20, 1891 and Medicine Hat News, April 5, 1894.

89. Medicine Hat Times, August 3, 1893.

90. Ibid., July 21, 1892 and Medicine Hat News, July 25, 1895.

In their desire to develop the west the framers of the National Policy enacted some provisions which, as time went on, appeared more and more unfair to the settlers of that area. One law which was almost universally condemned in the west was that dealing with the manufacture, sale, and possession of liquor. From the founding of the Medicine Hat Times until the Territorial Legislature was given power to deal with this question in 1891, the Dominion government was criticized in almost every issue of the paper. The editor, D. G. Holt, led a protest in Medicine Hat which culminated in a public meeting at which a resolution was passed stating that the time had come to grant the citizens of the Northwest the right possessed by citizens of other parts of Canada---the right to make their own liquor laws.⁹¹ Although they recognized that prohibition had been necessary to stop the whiskey trade with the Indians and to control the liquor traffic during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, those reasons did not justify the retention of the system in a settled area. The Northwest Council agreed with this contention and passed a resolution requesting parliament to grant it authority to deal with the question.⁹² By closing all the breweries in the Northwest Territories and then allowing Manitoba beer to be imported by permit holders, the federal government merely

91. Medicine Hat Times, November 17, 1887.

92. Ibid., November 24, 1887.

added fuel to the fire.⁹³ By 1891 even the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police reported to Parliament that the permit system was a failure; he stated that it was unfair and unenforceable.

In an editorial on the Commissioner's report J. K. Drinnan wrote:

Indeed we cannot conceive how the Federal Government can longer refuse to amend this odious law, which has long ceased to fulfil the object for which it was enacted. The permit system has served its time and the sooner it is annulled and a new act, consistent with the changed conditions of the country enacted, the better for the prosperity of the Northwest.... The country is being drained of money by the obnoxious law which permits beer to be imported and yet forbids its manufacture. There is not much of the principle of the National Policy in such a law.⁹⁴

Another feature of the law that was strongly protested was that while the residents of the Territories were prohibited from purchasing liquor for their own consumption, the Canadian Pacific Railway was permitted to sell spirits in their dining cars and hotels in the Northwest.⁹⁵ Finally, the law was protested because breweries and distilleries in the Territories would create a good market for barley and other produce of the west.⁹⁶ Instead of the limited supply of money in the Territories being depleted through the importation of liquor both under permit and illegally, a license law would draw capital and provide an additional cash export. The

93. Medicine Hat Times, December 1, 1887.

94. Ibid., May 21, 1891.

95. Ibid., May 31, 1888.

96. Ibid., February 16, 1889.

Dominion government conceded the justice of the Northwest's contention in the consolidation of the North-West Territories Acts introduced in the session of 1889⁹⁷ but did not make statutory provision for the Northwest Assembly to act on the question until the session of 1891. The license system that was introduced in 1892 as a result of this enabling legislation met with universal approval.⁹⁸ Even many of the Temperance societies felt that it induced greater moderation than the former system.

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The place of the French language and religiously-divided denominational schools in Manitoba and the Northwest also contributed to the feeling in the west that it was too often merely a pawn in the hands of eastern interests and prejudices. The history of the agitation to dispense with the official use of French and to set up a system of "national schools" without regard to religious considerations clearly illustrates the secondary place the interests and desires of the west occupied in the councils of the nation. In both cases the need for compromise between the vested interests in Ontario and Quebec virtually eclipsed the expressed desire of the overwhelming majority of people in Manitoba and the Northwest.

97. Medicine Hat Times, April 20, 1889.

98. Ibid., July 20, 1893.

The population of Medicine Hat, right from the beginning, was made up principally of English-speaking Protestants from Ontario. To them, the maintenance of the French language and separate schools was an unwarranted waste of money so badly needed to provide essential services and development. This feeling was magnified in the minds of the citizens by their ingrained distrust of the French. A striking illustration of this prejudice was the reaction of the editor of the Times to the rumor that Joseph Royal was to be appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories in 1887. D. G. Holt wrote that it would be an act of folly to appoint a French Canadian to the position. "Their calibre is too light, and their character too pliable in the hands of certain parties to suit the solid reasoning Anglo-Saxon and Celt."⁹⁹ An earlier example of this same prejudice appeared in an editorial on the reaction in Quebec to the execution of Riel in 1885. B. J. McMahon, in an editorial entitled "The Frothy French," wrote:

The scenes enacted in the Province of Quebec, upon the intelligence having reached there that Riel had paid the last penalty of the law must have caused every intelligent and impartial citizen to experience a feeling akin to humiliation, if not exasperation.

In view of the fact that Riel had a fair trial, and was dealt with leniently,...the actions of the mobs in Quebec can only be characterized as unreasonable and disloyal in the highest degree.¹⁰⁰

99. Medicine Hat Times, July 23, 1887.

100. Ibid., November 26, 1885.

By 1888 there was a strong demand that Section 110 of the North-West Territories Act be changed so that the official use of French could be discontinued.¹⁰¹ That Macdonald was aware of the feeling in the Northwest is illustrated by a letter he wrote to the Hon. J. A. Chapleau on June 6, 1888, refusing him the position of Minister of the Interior.

As to the Department of the Interior...a knowledge of the country, and of its people and especially of the Indians is imperatively demanded---and that demand must be gratified.

There is no especial reason why a French Canadian should be preferred for office in the West. The people of Quebec will not migrate in that direction. They, wisely, I think, desire to settle the lands yet unoccupied in their Province and to add to their influence in Eastern Ontario. The consequence is that Manitoba and the North-West Territories are becoming what British Columbia now is, wholly English---with English laws, English, or rather British, immigration, and, I may add, English prejudices....

The halfbreeds, whether French or English, are a diminishing quantity, and need not be taken into consideration as a potential force---and as to their rights, they have been more than recognized.¹⁰²

In October of 1889 the Northwest Assembly adopted a petition to Parliament praying that the section be repealed.¹⁰³ In January

101. Medicine Hat Times, March 8, 1888 and March 29, 1888.

102. Quoted in J. Pope, op. cit., p. 414.

103. Medicine Hat Times, October 31, 1889.

of 1890, Dalton McCarthy, the member for North Simcoe, moved that clause one hundred and ten be deleted from the North-West Territories Act.¹⁰⁴ The threat of a split in the ranks not only of the government but also of the opposition necessitated some form of compromise. In order to save the intent of the bill Davin moved an amendment that the "Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories be authorized to deal with the subject of this Bill by ordinance or enactment, after the next general election for the said Territories."¹⁰⁵ This amendment, however, did not go far enough to satisfy the members from Quebec. Consequently the motion was amended to favor giving the Assembly power to regulate the language of its own records and debates but insisting that ordinances would have to be printed in both languages and that French could still be used in the courts of the Territories.¹⁰⁶ The actual change in the North-West Territories Act was not made until 1891, and therefore the Assembly was powerless to act until 1892.

Although dissatisfied with only a partial victory, the Medicine Hat Times appears to have recognized that this was the most that could be accomplished in the situation. The agitation for removal of the two remaining privileges that the French language enjoyed

104. Commons Debates, 1890, p. 38.

105. Ibid., p. 532.

106. Medicine Hat Times, February 27, 1890.

in the Territories continued but was soon overshadowed by the much more basic issue of "national schools."

Although the Times had approved the resolution of the Northwest Assembly in 1889 that it be given power to deal with the separate school question in the Territories,¹⁰⁷ it does not appear, initially, to have given much consideration to the significance of the Manitoba School Act of 1890 to the future of the separate school question in the Northwest. In fact, the first mention of the Manitoba School Act came during the election campaign of 1891. In commenting on the issues at stake in the election the paper reported that the trade policies of the respective parties created the greatest interest everywhere except in Quebec, where the trade problem was being made subservient to race and religious questions. There, the same parties who had cried out against the hanging of the rebel and murderer, Riel, and threatened to rebel if the Jesuits' Estates Act was disallowed, were demanding pledges from candidates to vote for disallowance of the Separate School and Dual Language Acts of the Manitoba Legislature. Quebec, the editor stated, was a thorn in the flesh of Canadian politics and would remain so until both political parties ceased toadying to its prejudices.¹⁰⁸ There was little further comment on the subject until 1895.

107. Medicine Hat Times, October 31, 1889.

108. Ibid., February 19, 1891.

The reason for the revival of interest in the Manitoba school question in Medicine Hat did not rest solely on the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council in 1895. In 1892 the Northwest Assembly had passed a school ordinance which, while allowing both Catholic public and Protestant public schools, placed all schools under one council of public instruction and provided for common texts, examinations and inspectors. It also provided that only secular subjects were to be taught during school hours.¹⁰⁹ By 1894, however, the Roman Catholic hierarchy was protesting against the ordinance and had presented a petition to the Dominion parliament in which they denounced the school legislation of both Manitoba and the Northwest.¹¹⁰ As the school question in the Northwest appeared to be associated with that of Manitoba in the minds of the French-Catholic hierarchy, the Medicine Hat paper came to see Manitoba's fight as its own. In March of 1895 the editor argued that the opponents of the school ordinance could not accept two facts. First, that the Roman Catholic hierarchy refused to be convinced that the schools maintained at the public expense were not the fitting place for teaching creeds; and secondly, the French-Canadian could not disabuse his mind of the idea that he and his kindred had still the right to dictate what should or what should

109. Medicine Hat Times, January 18, 1894.

110. Medicine Hat News, May 25, 1895.

not be done in Canada.¹¹¹ By May the editor was heatedly arguing that Canada was already carrying dead weight enough in the priest-ridden province of Quebec. It could not afford to allow itself to be further handicapped in the same way.¹¹²

In 1895, after the Privy Council had decided that the minority in Manitoba had the right to appeal to the federal government to remedy the Manitoba legislation, which they claimed had deprived them of rights guaranteed them by the Manitoba Act, the government issued a remedial order which was rejected by Manitoba. Consequently, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, though faced with the imminent dissolution of Parliament, attempted to secure passage of a Remedial bill. Although Laurier, the Liberal leader, had criticized the Conservative government in 1893 for its slowness in interfering and for not giving redress to the minority who "had been subjected to the most infamous tyranny,"¹¹³ he had changed his stand by 1896 and was condemning the attempt of the government to impose a settlement. In a speech at Quebec he proposed the appointment of a commission of inquiry. If a real grievance was found to exist he was confident that the Hon. Mr. Greenway would be the first to

111. Medicine Hat News, March 8, 1894.

112. Ibid., May 25, 1894.

113. Medicine Hat Times, March 16, 1893.

acquiesce and render justice to the minority.¹¹⁴ There was sufficient implication of respect for provincial rights in this stand to draw the support of the News, which from the start had maintained that it was a provincial matter in which the federal government had no right to interfere. When the results of federal election were announced the editor of the News made his approval abundantly clear. Forster wrote:

The result, we believe, is the verdict of the Canadian people as a whole upon the Manitoba School Question. It was upon this issue mainly that the election was worked. The people's verdict is startling in its significance, and betokens the views of the masses upon the question of provincial rights. While the change of government may not mean the abandonment of the school question, we believe it will mean an altogether different way of dealing with it.¹¹⁵

In the Manitoba schools case, then, one sees the growth of the demand for greater local autonomy, a demand which rapidly gathered strength as the people of the Territories recognized that policies suitable to the east did not always meet the needs of the west. At the height of the controversy in 1895 the editor had written that "referred to Ottawa means that this question which alone concerns the west, will practically be settled by the east." He went on to say:

...in Manitoba's attitude and Manitoba's fate we read our own. If the system of broad national non-sectarian, non denominational schools triumphs in

114. From a speech given May 9, 1896 at Quebec, reported in the Medicine Hat News, May 14, 1896.

115. Medicine Hat News, June 25, 1896.

the prairie province, the same thing will come to pass in our own future provinces---we will have schools in which the children will mingle together regardless of denomination, and in which the same rights are extended to every man's child, and in which the children can grow up together to manhood, knowing one another and respecting one another.¹¹⁶

Each of the foregoing issues illustrates a facet of the concept of Canadian nationalism which was developing in the west. To them, a national policy should have been one which emphasized the needs and interests of all sections of Canada, not one which developed the potential of the east by making other sections, particularly the west, subservient to its interests. To the extent that the National Policy appeared to fail to take western interests and aspirations into account, therefore, it gradually lost the support of westerners in general and the Medicine Hat papers in particular.

116. Medicine Hat News, June 27, 1895.

CHAPTER IV

LAND POLICY

Of the various facets of the National Policy, the most difficult to deal with in relation to Medicine Hat is that of Dominion Land Policy. The editors of the Times and News devoted relatively little attention to this issue for a number of very basic reasons.

The most important of these reasons was that very few people settled in the area tributary to Medicine Hat during the period from 1885 to 1896. While the population of the town rose from six hundred to nine hundred eighty-one between 1885 and 1895, the population of the surrounding country does not appear to have kept pace with even this meagre growth rate. The only reliable figures for the population of the area appeared in 1888 and 1893. In the former the population of the area was 1,240 and by the latter had increased by only seventy-six persons to 1,316.¹ As the reports of these statistics indicate that the population of Medicine Hat, plus Dunmore and Stair, were included in these figures, the rural population which was small in 1888 must have actually declined by 1893. The population of Medicine Hat alone, which rose from six hundred in 1888 to six hundred sixty in 1891 and nine hundred eighty-one by 1895, increased faster than the population for the whole area.

1. For a more complete discussion of population, see pages 34-35.

Many factors contributed to the lack of immigration to this locality. Among the factors which tended to slow settlement were the declining price of wheat on both the Canadian and international markets,² the availability of land in the relatively better known territories of the United States, and the unfavorable reputation given to the area by Palliser, many of the early settlers, and people passing through on the railway. In addition, the rapid construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway across Manitoba and the Northwest Territories had opened far more land for settlement than could immediately be occupied and settlers tended to fill lands available in Manitoba first. Finally, in an area which had such an unfortunate reputation to overcome, agitation for a change in land policy, to provide more adequately for ranching needs, would have tended to discredit the favorable reports which the paper circulated to encourage settlement. Not until after 1896 was there sufficient competition for land in the area to arouse any widespread criticism of Dominion land policy.

The editor of a paper in such a sparsely settled area naturally concentrated most of his editorial energies on more obvious and immediate problems: attracting settlers, soliciting aid from the Dominion government for local works and services, demanding local

2. W. A. Mackintosh, Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces, p. 8.

autonomy, encouraging railway development which would tend to benefit the town of Medicine Hat, encouraging the investment of capital in industries based on the raw materials available around the town. As the period progressed, however, the lack of agricultural settlement did bring a recognition of the need for improvements in federal land policy. If the area was to realize its potential as a ranching country, policies relating to grazing leases and hay permits needed to be revised; if it was to develop as an agricultural region, irrigation on an immense scale was imperative to supplement the meagre supply of natural moisture.

When the Dominion government secured Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company it came into possession of lands five times the area of the original Dominion. By the Manitoba Act of 1870 the Dominion parliament provided that "all ungranted or waste lands," in the Northwest Territories as well as in Manitoba, were to be "administered by the Government of Canada for the purposes of the Dominion."³ Among these "purposes of the Dominion," there were two that were of particular importance to the Medicine Hat area. These were the twin problems which form such an integral part of the National Policy---railways and settlement. The need for a Pacific railway appeared to be imperative in 1870 and there was no other resource available to secure so large an investment.

3. Statutes of Canada, 33 Vic., c. 3 (1870).

The cash expended in construction and in subsidies to the Canadian Pacific was considered to be an advance to be repaid from the sale of lands. In 1883, Sir Charles Tupper, then Minister of Railways, defended in Parliament the policy of reserving the lands of the west:

The interests of this country demand that the Canadian Pacific Railway should be made a success....Are the interests of Manitoba and the North-West to be sacrificed to the interests of Canada? I say, if it is necessary, yes.⁴

In regard to settlement, it was feared that if Manitoba and the Territories were given control of the public domain, they might have adopted policies which would hinder rapid settlement of the west. A free-homestead system, somewhat similar to that of the United States, appeared to Dominion authorities to be the most practical means of promoting rapid settlement. This was essential to the success of western railways and the hoped-for expansion of eastern industry. As a consequence of this line of reasoning, Macdonald said during the debate on the Manitoba Act:

It would be injudicious to have a large province which would have control over lands and might interfere with the general policy of the Government in opening up communications to the Pacific, besides the land regulations of the Province might be obstructive to immigration. All that vast territory should be for purposes of settlement under one control, and that the Dominion legislature.⁵

4. As quoted in Chester Martin, "Dominion Lands Policy," Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. II (Toronto, 1938), p. 470. Hereafter cited as Chester Martin, Dominion Lands Policy.

5. As quoted in Chester Martin, Dominion Lands Policy, p. 227.

Not until 1930 were the unalienated lands to be turned over to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Although homestead regulations had been set up for the Northwest by Dominion Orders in Council in 1871, the original regulations did not provide for homesteading within the railway belt, a belt of land extending twenty miles on either side of the Pacific railway. By 1882, however, even-numbered sections of all Dominion lands were opened for homestead entry, each homesteader being entitled to file on a quarter-section of one hundred sixty acres upon payment of a ten-dollar registration fee. Between 1872 and 1890 a settler could also pre-empt an adjoining quarter-section which he was entitled to purchase, at a price set by the government, as soon as he had secured the patent for his original homestead. Even on a farm of three hundred twenty acres very few settlers could make an adequate living in most areas around Medicine Hat. Without irrigation, agriculture was possible only in the relatively better-watered river bottoms. Although dry-land farming techniques such as the use of summer fallow were gradually introduced from the United States in the period after 1891, their introduction coincided with a period of falling immigration.⁶

The repeal of such provisions of the Dominion Lands Act as those providing for second homesteads in 1886 and pre-emptions

6. Between 1892 and 1896 homestead registrations in what are now the Prairie Provinces dropped from 5,000 to fewer than 2,000 per year.

as of January 1, 1890,⁷ because of their tendency to promote speculation, was strongly endorsed by the Times.⁸ Later, though, the Times did support the agitation led by the Northwest Assembly and the federal member for Western Assiniboia to restore the right to secure second homesteads to those settlers who had entered the country before 1886.⁹ This was seen as a simple act of justice as many settlers had come into the country believing they were entitled to them:

With...other journals we do not believe in the principle of second homesteads, but we do believe in the government of a country keeping inviolate its promises to the people, and more especially to those whom the promises induced to become subjects.¹⁰

Also, in 1886 the editor, B. J. McMahon, had supported the request that pre-emptions be classed as second homesteads.¹¹ In what Drinnan referred to as another "simple act of justice," the Department of the Interior adopted this policy in 1891.¹² Finally, the Times was in full accord with every move to make the payment schedule for pre-emptions easier for bona fide residents until this practice was discontinued in 1891. This, like every other

7. Statutes of Canada, 49 Vic., C. 27 (1886).

8. Medicine Hat Times, April 15, 1886.

9. Ibid., January 26, 1888.

10. Ibid., June 18, 1891.

11. Ibid., November 20, 1886.

12. Ibid., August 13, 1891.

move to improve the chances of success for the actual settler, could count on the support of the Times and its successor.

It was with regard to regulations affecting the ranching industry, however, that the Medicine Hat papers were most outspoken, as, next to the railway, this industry was the town's chief means of support. Although the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 had provided for grazing leases in a general way, specific regulations respecting ranching were not made until 1881. These regulations provided for twenty-one year leases of up to one hundred thousand acres at a rental of one cent an acre per annum. Two additional conditions were that one head of cattle had to be placed on each acre, and that the lease could be cancelled for homestead entry upon two years notice by the government. In 1886 the rental was raised to two cents per acre and two acres were allowed for each head of cattle. Soon, however, it was recognized that in some areas, notably that around Medicine Hat, much more grazing land was necessary for stock. Consequently, twenty acres were allowed per head of cattle. In 1887 new regulations provided for open leases, so the land would be available for homestead entry at any time, and made the granting of large leases obtainable only through public tender. In the case of grazing leases, as in land grants, the problem of speculation became a serious matter. In 1888 Holt reported that only twenty-one out of forty-six lease-holders had carried out the terms of their leases. Almost ten million dollars was owed to the government in

rentals and some of the leases had less than one-sixth of the stock that the terms of the lease required. He was strongly of the opinion that the government should cancel the leases of those who had not fulfilled the terms of their agreement.¹³ As the bulk of the land was held under the old system, whereby the government had to give the rancher two years notice of cancellation before homesteading could be permitted, the land was virtually withdrawn from settlement even if it was not being used. By cancelling leases, the terms of which had not been fulfilled, much of the land could be placed under the new system of open leases. This procedure enabled settlers to homestead on the leased lands independent of the lease holder. In regard to the cattle industry itself, Holt concluded that "by having large tracts of land under lease without stocking, others who perhaps would stock the land, [were] kept out."¹⁴ When many of these leases were cancelled early in 1889 by the Hon. Edgar Dewdney, the new Minister of the Interior, the Times' editor expressed his satisfaction.¹⁵ In 1891 the government notified the large ranchers of its intention to cancel all outstanding leases granted under the old system and the following year offered to sell them up to one-tenth of the land they held under lease. This move was strongly seconded by the Medicine Hat paper as it was expected to attract new home-

13. Medicine Hat Times, June 14, 1888.

14. Ibid., June 14, 1888.

15. Ibid., February 8, 1889.

steaders to the area.¹⁶ Each of these homesteaders tended to lease small parcels of grazing land of from six hundred forty to five thousand acres.¹⁷ This growth of mixed farming, because of the greater number of people involved, naturally benefitted the town more than had the large concerns devoted solely to ranching.

In 1889 and 1890 the problem of hay permits brought a somewhat mixed reaction from the Medicine Hat Times. Although the editor realized that regulations covering the cutting of hay on government lands were necessary, to prevent destruction of hay meadows by too early cutting, he did not approve of the sudden strictness with which they were enforced in 1889.¹⁸ Enforcement had become necessary due to the inroads made by speculators, and because of complaints by settlers who did purchase permits that if they complied with the terms of the permit they often found the hay had been cut by someone else before the date the permit allowed them to commence haying.¹⁹ The issue caused some frustration for Drinnan as he realized that permits were necessary to control early cutting and speculation, but that a price adequate to cover the cost of administration and enforcement would put them out of reach of many settlers.²⁰ Also,

16. Medicine Hat Times, May 18, 1893.

17. Ibid., March 16, 1893.

18. Ibid., July 27, 1889.

19. Ibid., August 14, 1890.

20. Ibid., July 31, 1890.

when they were enforced, it was all too often the unsuspecting settler who was caught. Repeated complaints resulted in the cancellation of the permit system in 1893.²¹

Another matter which caused some excitement in 1889 was the over-zealous enforcement of regulations covering the removal of timber from Crown lands. Most settlers had freely appropriated logs for building and for fence posts wherever they could find them. When the Crown Timber agent at Calgary sent out bills for these logs, some of which had been used several years before, the Times took up the issue:

To say that the people are indignant at the treatment they are receiving would be putting it mildly. They are fighting mad, and with one voice declare they will not pay these unjust bills.

We hope the Government will not enforce payment, as it will have the effect of retarding immigration. Already settlers are writing to their friends in the East and advising them not to come here until this matter is settled.²²

The controversy ended two months later when the Minister of the Interior stated that the government had decided:

...to grant to bona fide settlers a free permit to cut all the dead timber, up to seven inches in diameter, which they required for their own use, this...in addition to the free permit for larger timber for building purposes issued to each homesteader on application.²³

21. Medicine Hat Times, April 5, 1894.

22. Ibid., July 13, 1889.

23. Ibid., September 6, 1889.

This, plus the cancellation of the bills, solved the problem as most settlers preferred the dead timber, it being lighter to handle and to transport.

In general, the newspapers of Medicine Hat supported the government's policy of granting lands to railway companies as an inducement to build lines in the west. From the beginning the editors appeared to recognize the necessity of this policy, even if they did not always approve of some of the side effects. For example, the demand of the Northwest Council in 1886 that odd-numbered sections be opened for settlement was duly noted by the Times, but no editorial appeared urging government action in this regard.²⁴ Criticism of numerous extensions given by the federal government to railway companies, for which land was reserved, has already been noted.²⁵ All too often these companies applied for a charter and had choice land reserved for them long in advance of any intention or ability to build. Their charters, with the reserves of land to be earned through construction, appeared to pass from hand to hand, reputedly at a considerable profit to the speculators, without producing the transportation systems which the country so urgently needed. Another issue growing out of the land grant to the Canadian Pacific Railway concerned the Northwest Land Company.²⁶ By virtue of the

24. Medicine Hat Times, February 18, 1886.

25. See Chapter II.

26. Ibid.

tax exemption granted on the unsold portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway land grant, this company avoided paying taxes for several years on town lots which it was manifestly holding for speculative purposes.²⁷

Finally, by the end of the period under consideration, criticism of colonization companies in general began to appear. They tied up considerable quantities of land which they were unable to settle or even cultivate at a profit. In 1895 A. M. R. Gordon noted that:

The only thing that some of these colonization farm companies require to make them successful, and an advertisement for the country, is more economical and at the same time, more practical management. When individual settlers come into the country with very little capital and make their investments a success, it is hard to understand how large companies, with large capital, succeed only in making things go to the wall.²⁸

The News had just cause to be sceptical of their value. In 1887, the Times, while opposing colonization companies generally, had strongly endorsed the project of the Canada Agricultural Coal and Colonization Company, under Sir John Lister Kaye, to establish ten farms in the Territories between Calgary and Regina.²⁹ Two of these farms were to be located near Medicine Hat, at Stair and Dunmore. Unsound financial management and inability to adapt agricultural

27. Medicine Hat Times, November 2, 1888.

28. Medicine Hat News, February 7, 1895.

29. Medicine Hat Times, January 15, 1887.

practices to the requirements of the country brought about the failure, not only of the ten original farms, but also of the much larger scheme of assisted immigration with which they were associated. In trying to explain away the failure in 1890, Drinnan commented that:

The Kaye system of management was radically wrong in its inception, and was carried out in a spirit of reckless extravagance and experimental ignorance such as no institution could long bear up under. Failure under such conditions cannot be attributed to any fault of the country.³⁰

The problem was that the spectacular failures of such large companies received considerable notice in the east and in Europe, bringing the Canadian west a somewhat undeserved unfavorable reputation. At a time when Canada was competing at a disadvantage with the United States for the limited number of emigrants leaving Europe, this type of publicity was especially unfortunate. As a result, much criticism was levelled against the government for making these grants in the first place. The tendency, therefore, was to demand that public land be granted to actual settlers only. In the election of 1896 the suggestion of both the Patron and the Liberal candidates, that this be done, brought a favorable response from the editor.³¹ Not even Davin's suggestion that the government buy back the Canadian Pacific

30. Medicine Hat Times, July 31, 1890.

31. Medicine Hat News, January 31, 1895, February 28, 1895, and May 14, 1896.

Railway lands, so as to permit more compact settlement, met with greater favor.³²

ii

In 1887 and 1891 the few settlers in the Medicine Hat area harvested excellent crops of cereal grains; in fact, in all the odd-numbered years between 1887 and 1895 at least fair crops were produced. It is, therefore, not unnatural that the editors, who had a stake in the development of the area, would tend to minimize the problem of drought. To them, the action of the government in withdrawing the section from settlement in 1882³³ had placed the area at a continuing disadvantage in drawing settlers. An editorial from 1889 expressed the prevailing feeling:

The settlement of this section of the Northwest was nipped in the bud by the mistaken policy of the Government in withdrawing it from settlement at a time when, owing to the advent of the railway, settlers were pouring in and squatting on Government lands. It is true, many of these people were speculators or agents of such, yet there were among them a goodly number of genuine homesteaders, who on failing to get entries or squatters' rights left the country, numbers returning to their eastern homes, and we can readily believe they did all in their power to discourage emigration to this particular portion of the Northwest. Although the district was finally opened for settlement it has taken years of persistent advertising to again draw public attention to the many advantages which it offers to settlers.³⁴

32. Medicine Hat Times, May 14, 1896.

33. The even-numbered sections were re-opened for settlement by 1888. Medicine Hat Times, May 3, 1888.

34. Medicine Hat Times, November 21, 1889.

To them it seemed that the opening of a land office in Medicine Hat, to assist settlers who wished to locate there, would be the least the government could do for the area they felt it had wronged. The Minister of the Interior had promised one in 1885.³⁵ Though an intelligence office was opened in 1887, it was soon closed and the area served from Regina by a travelling intelligence officer. Such an office, even when in operation, did not adequately serve the needs of those settlers who came into the area. Information as to whether land had been entered on was often not available in the local office as the Medicine Hat area was parcelled out among three different agencies. Thus, after an immigrant had located a possible homestead, he had to travel one hundred twenty miles to Lethbridge to file on his prospective land, only to find, in many cases, that someone had preceded him. If the settler attempted to avoid a possible fruitless trip by appointing an agent to act for him in Lethbridge, he had to apply to the Commissioner in Winnipeg for permission to use this procedure. As this was time consuming, he ran an even greater risk of losing out to a prior claim.³⁶ Although the Medicine Hat papers realized that the volume of business might be relatively small, such an office seemed imperative

35. Medicine Hat Times, November 26, 1885 and January 15, 1887.

36. Ibid., November 21, 1889.

if the region was to attract and hold bona fide settlers, for when settlers had difficulty entering claims the adverse publicity affected the plans of emigrants coming from the same areas.³⁷ To the people of Medicine Hat, the continuing lack of a land office appeared to be a sure sign of government indifference. The withdrawal of even the intelligence office in 1889 merely increased this feeling of neglect.

When the Department of Agriculture announced that one or more experimental farms would be set up in the Northwest, Medicine Hat naturally hoped that their locality would be chosen as the site for one of them.³⁸ However, when the Hon. John Carling decided that the Territorial experimental farm would be established at Indian Head, the editor of the Times, although disappointed, pointed out the great advantages of the farm for all people of the Territories, no matter where it was located.³⁹ In the ensuing years the Times and the News were lavish in their praise of the work of the whole government experimental farm system. By establishing what crops and types of cultivation were best suited to the Northwest, they provided a valuable adjunct to the land, immigration and settlement policies of the Dominion government. Experiments carried on at Indian Head indicated, for example, that the Northwest was particu-

37. Medicine Hat Times, February 20, 1890.

38. Ibid., November 3, 1887.

39. Ibid., February 23, 1888.

larly suited to the culture of malting barley, and the crops grown from the free seed provided by the farm to settlers around Medicine Hat, indicated that that area could develop into one of the best barley-producing regions in Canada.⁴⁰ It was also through the work of the Indian Head farm that the value of summer fallow in dry areas was established. Although Angus Mackay, the manager of the farm, recognized this as early as 1889, conclusive evidence was not given general publication until 1895. In that year a comparison of the results of different methods of cultivation was published which showed that, when the same type of wheat was used, a crop on summer fallow matured earlier, produced a greater yield per acre and a greater weight per bushel.⁴¹ Other projects dealt with the suitability of different varieties of fruit trees, forest trees, and grasses, as well as the value of wind breaks.⁴² In 1890 the editor of the Times wrote that "the value to the country of the government experimental farm is becoming more apparent every year and our farming population, especially of the Northwest owe a debt of gratitude to the originators of the scheme in Canada."⁴³ The experimental farm was also made the agent through which the government distributed seed, either free or at a nominal charge, to

40. Medicine Hat Times, October 10, 1889, May 8, 1890, and April 7, 1892.

41. A. S. Morton, op. cit., pp. 101-107 and Medicine Hat Times, May 8, 1890.

42. Medicine Hat Times, March 23, 1889, May 11, 1889, February 27, 1890, and May 8, 1890.

43. Ibid., May 8, 1890.

settlers who suffered crop failures. Although some criticism was made of the way the system was set up, no criticism of the part played by the experimental farm ever appeared.

iii

As the uncertainty of natural moisture in the Medicine Hat area came to be recognized as a factor which would prevent profitable settlement of much of the land, the paper took up the cause of irrigation. In his report to the Department of the Interior for 1886, J. S. Dennis had stated:

The soil throughout the southern portion of the Territories is a light loam, well adapted for the growth of cereals,...and when it is noted that the total rainfall of Medicine Hat, which is about a central point, for that part of the year up to the end of July, was only four inches, the reason for the failure of this season's crops will be readily seen.

Consideration of this subject leads to the conclusion that something must be done, where practicable, to ensure good crops by the aid of irrigation....

The statement may I think be safely made, that the experience of the farmers in the southern portions of the Territories goes to show that there is no certainty of a crop while dependent on the natural rainfall.⁴⁴

While the Department of the Interior did not encourage discussion of the possibility of irrigation until 1894 for fear that it might convince some intending settlers that all of the Northwest was arid,⁴⁵ the Times was pointing out the desirability of irrigation

44. Medicine Hat Times, July 16, 1887.

45. Ibid., April 12, 1894.

by 1887,⁴⁶ and demanding government action on the matter by 1889.⁴⁷

In February of 1889, William Pearce, Dominion Superintendent of Mines, read a paper to the annual meeting of the Association of Dominion Land Surveyors in Ottawa.⁴⁸ In this paper he noted that the settlers of the Northwest had come from the eastern provinces of Canada and from Great Britain, both areas in which rainfall and water supply were abundant and irrigation unknown. Had they come from irrigated districts, thus bringing with them their knowledge and experience, he felt that it was probable that the number of settlers would have been greater and that their advancement in production and wealth would have been enormously increased. Unless a comprehensive system of settlement and irrigation was developed in regions where insufficient rainfall was common, the progress of settlement would be slow and sparse, consequently depriving people of the schools, churches and social intercourse so essential to the well-being of all communities. Of even greater importance for the future of the area was the fact that the early settlers would naturally occupy the lands bordering the streams, lakes and rivers. The result would be that by controlling the sources of water they would prevent the profitable settlement of as much

46. Medicine Hat Times, July 16, 1887.

47. Ibid., December 5, 1889.

48. The text of the address was reprinted in the Medicine Hat Times, December 12, 1889.

as eighty-five per cent of the land---land which could be made productive through irrigation. It was therefore imperative that, if irrigation was ever to be adopted, "a reservation should be made immediately of right in the Crown, to enter upon lands entered for as homesteads or pre-emptions, or sold, for the purpose of constructing irrigation works."⁴⁹

Following a request by the Northwest Assembly that it be allowed to send a delegation to Ottawa to discuss the subject of irrigation with the government,⁵⁰ the Times began to agitate for an irrigation convention of the interested areas of the Territories.⁵¹ It was hoped that such a convention would urge on the government the necessity of enacting legislation to control the waters of rivers and streams for public use, so as to restrain individuals from monopolizing more than they could profitably use themselves. In addition, such a convention, by demonstrating the interest of the settlers, might be able to interest the government in developing a general irrigation system. In regard to finances, Drinnan claimed:

Eastern taxpayers need have no fear of the expense, as the increase in value of government lands alone, which must result from the completion of such a work

49. The text of the address was reprinted in the Medicine Hat Times, December 12, 1889.

50. The Medicine Hat Times, December 5, 1889.

51. Ibid., February 20, 1890.

would more than balance the necessary outlay, not to speak of the great benefit to the whole of Canada the acquiring of thousands of settlers, who would at once become national wealth producers, would be.⁵²

A certain degree of inconsistency is apparent in this stand. An irrigation scheme of the magnitude proposed by the Times and its successor the News would involve an enormous outlay of capital which could probably only be raised by pledging the land as security. If this expedient were to be adopted, the free homestead system which was strongly favored by the Medicine Hat paper would have had to have been abrogated in respect to at least the affected lands. Also, any comprehensive scheme undertaken by the government would have required the acquisition of lands held by the Hudson's Bay Company or reserved for railway land grants. Although the Times was continually castigating the federal government for its inability to attract immigrants, the paper failed to indicate where the people were to be found to buy irrigated land, or even how such an enormous increase in produce could be disposed of on declining world markets.⁵³

The enthusiasm of the editor for large scale irrigation schemes does not appear to have been shared by the general population of either the town or surrounding country. No Medicine Hat representation was present at the irrigation convention held in Calgary in March of

52. Medicine Hat Times, February 20, 1890.

53. Wheat prices at Liverpool declined by about one third between 1890 and 1895. Also Canadian cattle were scheduled in Britain in 1892. Sheep were also scheduled in 1895. See Chapter VI.

1894. In fact so little interest was exhibited in the area that Drinnan commented:

...our people have not awakened to a sense of the infinite importance of irrigation to the development of the country, and have failed to see, as the people of Alberta have done, that a system of irrigation, on an extensive scale, is not only desirable, but perfectly practical.⁵⁴

Late in 1895, even after Medicine Hat had been pushed into sponsoring an irrigation convention by the other interested areas, the successor to the Times was wondering why the people of the Medicine Hat and Maple Creek districts were so slow in taking up such an important matter as irrigation.⁵⁵ After all, the editor wrote, even such authorities as J. S. Dennis and William Pearce had pointed out the peculiar advantages which the Medicine Hat area possessed because of its climate.

In the election campaign of 1891 N. F. Davin had promised, at a meeting in Medicine Hat, that if he was returned to Parliament he would advocate a system of irrigation for the Northwest.⁵⁶ Like many other political promises made in Medicine Hat, this one appeared to be slow in being realized. After waiting almost two years for some form of action, the Times carried an editorial urging anew the need for a comprehensive irrigation scheme. To the argument that the

54. Medicine Hat Times, March 16, 1894.

55. Medicine Hat News, September 12, 1895.

56. Medicine Hat Times, February 26, 1891.

federal government would be showing favoritism to a particular area, it was pointed out that public monies and public lands had been freely given as long as Parliament could say: "this is done to promote the development and help on the prosperity of the country."⁵⁷ Such examples as railways, canals, experimental farms, the Dairy Commissioners, bounties to fishermen, a Fishery Intelligence Bureau, fish hatcheries, the Post Office, lighthouses, buoys and beacons were cited. All these expenditures, it was noted, were claimed to be for the general good, although the advantage might have seemed to have been largely local. If all these expenditures were justifiable, why could an irrigation project not be aided by the federal government?

Although Medicine Hat was not represented at the irrigation convention called at Calgary in March of 1894, its interests were carefully considered by the delegates and the Times faithfully reported the proceedings in the hope of stirring interest in the subject. Three important resolutions were adopted at the convention. The first urged the government:

...to at once make arrangements for a hydrographic survey of those parts of Alberta and Assiniboia lying south of Red Deer and west of Swift Current, with a view of ascertaining what area of country is capable of irrigation, the amount of water

57. Medicine Hat Times, October 12, 1893.

available for the purpose and the method in which the different streams should be used for the purpose.⁵⁸

The purpose of this resolution was to ensure that the government possessed the knowledge necessary to recognize the implications for the whole area of any applications that might be made for charters to irrigate particular areas. The second resolution urged the government to adopt provisions for subsidizing irrigation companies either in cash or land grants. This was considered necessary as the cost of irrigating a large tract of land could only be recouped as a result of settlement. Also, the government itself held the even-numbered sections. Thirdly, the union with Alberta of that part of Assiniboia lying west of the fourth meridian was urged. If the government could not see its way clear to sponsor an irrigation project, it could then erect the above-mentioned area into a province and allow it to develop irrigation projects on its own financial responsibility. During his address to the convention William Pearce said that the area tributary to Medicine Hat could be entered under a systematic development of irrigation and that, in his opinion, its advancement would probably be greater than that of any other district due to the fact that it was least affected by summer frosts. Consequently it was decided to attempt to interest that

58. Medicine Hat News, March 15, 1894.

area in setting up an irrigation association, and if this could be successfully done, to hold another convention there.

A sufficient number of interested people were apparently found, for a branch Irrigation League was set up immediately and another convention planned.⁵⁹ This convention met at the beginning of April to consider the resolutions passed in Calgary in relation to the proposed Federal Irrigation Bill. The first two resolutions from the Calgary convention were reaffirmed and several additional proposals passed. The most important of these were that the federal government set up a commission to study irrigation projects elsewhere, particularly in the United States; that an irrigation experimental farm be established immediately; that the government pass a statute reserving all natural waters to the Crown as had been suggested by William Pearce in 1889.⁶⁰ The convention sent an eight-member delegation to Ottawa to present the resolutions to the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior.⁶¹ A promise by Sir John Thompson of immediate action by Parliament augured well for the future of the project. By June the survey of the available water supply was commenced under Chief Inspector of Surveys, J. S. Dennis.⁶²

59. Medicine Hat News, March 22, 1894 and March 29, 1894.

60. Ibid., April 12, 1894.

61. Ibid., May 25, 1894.

62. Ibid., June 14, 1894.

With success apparently assured, the editor of the News felt sufficiently confident to urge caution, suggesting that canals should be put in only as they could be used. He wrote:

While we have the fullest confidence ourselves, in the success of the system and in the grand results which will be achieved, yet our immediate purpose must be to convince others of the practicability of that success and of the certainty of those results, and this can be best done by furnishing an object lesson in the shape of work done on a scale that will demonstrate, at once, the value of the system. When this is done, there will be no trouble in enlarging the scale of the work.⁶³

In July of 1894 Parliament passed another act which was intended to promote the development of irrigation in the Northwest. This act provided for the selection of land between Calgary and Medicine Hat in a compact block by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.⁶⁴ Market conditions, the difficulty of raising capital and the limited flow of immigrants, however, forced the postponement of this and other large-scale irrigation projects for the area. By 1895 it became obvious that no further action was planned by the government, the Canadian Pacific Railway or other large concerns. In September, with local enthusiasm waning, the editor wrote:

We have referred to this subject in our columns before without, we must admit, awakening any very perceptible enthusiasm over it, but it is too important a matter to let drop and we trust soon to see combined efforts

63. Medicine Hat News, May 31, 1894.

64. See Chapter II.

on the part of all who have the progress of our district at heart, that will lead to some practical steps being taken regarding it.⁶⁵

In conclusion, had the flow of immigrants to the Medicine Hat area been greater, the editors of the newspaper would almost certainly have been more concerned with the Dominion government's land policy. That there were a sufficient number of policies that were unsuitable to that area is obvious. No settler, in a region of such limited rainfall, could hope to make a success of farming only one hundred sixty acres unless the land were irrigated. Therefore, it was only because sufficient open land existed, to allow the homesteader to supplement his income by expanding into small-scale ranching, that the basic inadequacy of the homestead policy, when applied to this semi-arid area, was not immediately recognized. Even when this problem became obvious, the availability of more suitable agricultural land in other parts of the Northwest prevented sufficiently general agitation to force government action. Although the reservation of alternate sections for railway land grants, as well as the reservation of Hudson's Bay Company and school lands, prevented compact settlement in many parts of the Territories, the problem was most acute in the southwestern area in which Medicine Hat was located. Community services, which were essential to draw settlers to the area, were almost impossible to provide in a region of such sparse settle-

65. Medicine Hat News, September 12, 1895.

ment. Many of the most pressing inadequacies of the homestead system, when applied to the area tributary to Medicine Hat, could have been alleviated by large-scale development of irrigation. This, however, does not appear to have been feasible in the period before 1896. Limited markets, the high cost of transporting produce over such a vast distance, the small flow of immigration, the meagre resources of the new Dominion, and the inability to attract the necessary foreign investment all conspired to make such a project impractical at that time.

In respect to ranching leases, Dominion policy was equally slow in taking into account local needs. While the early leases appeared to provide a certain degree of security for twenty-one years, even this proved illusory, for they contained a provision allowing the government to cancel them with only two years' notice. Later leases did not even provide this scanty protection against the encroachment of homesteaders. Only the fact that the limited number of settlers coming to the Northwest before 1896 tended to choose land in better-watered areas made the situation tenable. Another provision of the early leases was that the rancher was to maintain a herd sufficiently large to provide a ratio of one head for each acre of land leased. Only slowly was the impossibility of a strict adherence to this provision recognized in Ottawa. In the meantime, the regulation added to the insecurity of the ranching population---if the rancher attempted to comply with the regulation,

a dry summer or a hard winter would have decimated his herd; if he failed to comply with it, his lease could have been cancelled.

Finally, the practice of granting leases by public tender only added to the general insecurity of the ranching industry.

While considerable attention was focused on the technical problem of securing entries and patents on homesteads around Medicine Hat, it is perhaps inconsistent that so little attention was given to the more basic inadequacies of the Dominion's land policy. The only explanations for this lie in the slow recognition and admission of the difficulties that had to be surmounted before settled agriculture could become practical in the area, the relatively small influx of settlers and the almost total dependence of the people of Medicine Hat on the railway.

CHAPTER V

IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

In dividing the settlement of the west into major periods, W. A. Mackintosh noted that the period from 1876 to 1882 should be characterized as a false start, the period from 1883 to 1895 as a period of decline or recession, and the period after 1896 as the period of the great influx. In the year 1882 homestead entries had reached a high of over seven thousand for what are now the prairie provinces and in 1883 Canada had attracted a total of one hundred thirty-three thousand immigrants. These annual totals, however, were to decline for the next thirteen years until a low point was reached in 1896. That year saw only one thousand eight hundred homestead entries in the prairie provinces, and a meagre seventeen thousand immigrant arrivals for the whole of Canada.¹ The report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations,² published in 1940, also noted that in each of the last three decades of the nineteenth century the increase in population in Canada was less than the natural increase. Although one and one-half million people entered Canada during that period, almost two million decided to leave. Canada thus became a temporary stopping place for people,

1. W. A. Mackintosh, Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces, pp. 2-3.

2. D. V. Smiley, op. cit., pp. 67-70.

some of them immigrants but many of them Canadian-born, moving to the United States. The report cited the general depression in trade between 1871 to 1873 and 1896 as a major cause of this inability of Canada, and more particularly the Canadian west, to attract and hold the anticipated number of settlers. The brief revival in trade between 1879 and 1883, which had been brought about by rapid railway expansion, faded away, and the general world improvement in trade between 1888 and 1890 was offset in Canada by poor crops and bank failures. It would be wrong, however, to attempt to place the whole blame for Canada's inability to attract and hold substantial numbers of immigrants, during this period, on conditions completely external to the Dominion. After all, the recurrent bouts of depression in Europe resulted in considerable migration from that area, and the New World stood to gain in population from the difficulties of the Old. Other areas, rich in resources but lacking in labor and capital, such as Australia, Argentina³ and the American West,⁴ fared better than Canada.

Although the National Policy had been conceived by eastern politicians as a solution to eastern economic problems, a strong western market was essential to its success. Settlement of the west would make the National Policy work, but at the same time it

3. Medicine Hat Times, March 30, 1889 and March 20, 1890.

4. Ibid., January 9, 1890.

must be recognized that various facets of the National Policy itself interfered with western development. The railway which opened the west to settlement provided an expensive transportation system for products which temporarily commanded a low price in distant markets; the Dominion's land policy was not always suited to the areas which were readily available to settlement; the tariff which encouraged the growth of eastern industry made the necessities of pioneer life more expensive than the settler's meagre income could afford; finally the lack of vigor with which the immigration policy of the Dominion government was pursued, in the period before 1896, brought the success of the whole venture into question.

In order to relate the settlement policies of the Dominion government to the Medicine Hat area, it is first necessary to refer to the degree of success achieved by the people who did settle there. About fifty settlers came into the country in 1882 in anticipation of the coming of the railway, but as a result of difficulties in obtaining title to their lands, most moved further west the following year.⁵ The town itself was established in 1883 as a result of the needs of the Canadian Pacific Railway and was to remain, essentially, a creature of that corporation during the entire period under consideration. Although the excellent crop of 1884 boded well for future immigration, the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 almost halted the flow of settlers, as many who were on their way

5. Medicine Hat Times, May 3, 1888.

to the Northwest decided, because of the unsettled conditions existing there, to make their homes in eastern Canada or the American west.⁶ Therefore, while the rebellion resulted in considerable commercial activity for the town, and an excellent crop in 1887 appeared to insure the future growth of the district, the initial flow of settlement had been turned into other channels. Even the exaggerated claims, published by the Times, of the wonderful advantages possessed by the area as a field of settlement for the agriculturalist failed to bring the desired results.⁷ A poor crop in 1888, a fair crop in 1889 and a complete crop failure in 1890⁸ finally brought a realization, even among the most optimistic, that the area could not be depended upon for consistently good yields of cereal grains. The problem, although not completely recognized at that time, was that the average rainfall during the growing season (April to August) was only 8.3 inches.⁹ The exodus of the German settlers from around Dunmore and the failure of Sir John Lester Kaye's assisted immigration scheme also helped to drive the point home. The hope for another series of wet seasons notwithstanding, the editor of the Times began to take a more realistic approach to the subject of agricultural settlement. An editorial in early 1891 suggested:

6. Medicine Hat Times, May 3, 1888.

7. For examples see the Medicine Hat Times, March 26, 1887 and April 2, 1887.

8. Medicine Hat Times, February 5, 1891.

9. J. B. Hedges, op. cit., p. 5.

...until they [wet seasons] do return, we would be foolish, looking at it from a purely selfish point of view, to advise incoming settlers to go into farming here, for in case they should fail they would become sworn enemies of the country, and in the future check the natural flow of immigration. We have sufficient other resources to induce settlers to locate here without advertising one we are not sure we possess.¹⁰

Drinnan went on to point out that the type of immigration that should be encouraged was the type that would develop and make use of the resources that the Medicine Hat district did have, such as mineral deposits and facilities for manufacturing. Continuing on the same theme, he pointed out the profits which he was sure awaited investors in ranching:

We have, and the statement is made advisedly, the finest ranching district in America. In this industry there is room for hundreds of investors and millions of money and the experience of the past eight or ten years says there is big money in it. There is also a splendid opening here for the establishment of creameries and dairy farms.¹¹

In addition to the realization that the Medicine Hat area would not become a major agricultural area in the near future, the year 1890 brought other ominous developments. The two coal mines, on which such high hopes had been built, were closed and railway development in other parts of the Territories resulted in the booming of neighboring towns. These developments had the effect of

10. Medicine Hat Times, February 5, 1891.

11. Ibid., February 5, 1891.

drawing off some of the unstable population and producing a feeling of unrest among those who remained.¹² There was also a growing possibility that the Canadian Pacific might establish its major shops at Calgary, thus reducing the importance of those in Medicine Hat. Such a move would have been a serious blow to a community which depended so completely on this one support.

This gloom was somewhat dispelled by the excellent crops in 1891---the best since 1887.¹³ However, an almost complete crop failure in 1892,¹⁴ followed by two more years of poor crops, discouraged many of the remaining farmers. Even the ranching industry was hard hit during the winter of 1892-93. Low temperatures, storms and heavy snowfall were experienced from the middle of November until the beginning of January, causing the loss of large numbers of range cattle.¹⁵ The succession of relatively mild winters, with little snowfall, had made the ranchers careless about putting up sufficient feed for a prolonged spell of cold weather, when the cattle would be unable to forage on the open prairie. As a result, losses ranged from five per cent in some districts, to as high as twenty-five per cent on some of the larger ranges around the base of the Cypress Hills.¹⁶

12. Medicine Hat Times, January 8, 1891.

13. Ibid., August 20, 1891.

14. Ibid., April 6, 1893.

15. Ibid., January 5, 1893.

16. Ibid., April 6, 1893.

By 1894 livestock shipments, which had begun as early as 1892, had recovered sufficiently to become a major source of income to the area. The News was able to report, by the beginning of 1895, that the Northwest, and in particular the Medicine Hat area, had finally changed from livestock importers to exporters.¹⁷ Further development, though, was dependent upon the establishment of adequate markets either in eastern Canada or in Europe. Due, at least in part, to inadequacies of Dominion policies, this trade in live cattle was severely hampered by British quarantines which were set up for cattle in 1892 and for sheep in 1895. These required that all livestock from Canada be slaughtered immediately upon being landed in England, thus forcing considerably lower prices on the shippers.¹⁸

Toward the end of the period under consideration an editorial appeared in the Medicine Hat News which illustrates clearly how the experiences of settlers in the area had resulted in a much more realistic appraisal of the possibilities of the region for settlement:

Perhaps were the unrivalled resources and climatic virtues of the Cypress Hills ranching country more fully known to the outside world, the district tributary to Medicine Hat and Maple Creek would more rapidly fill up with settlers....

We do not profess to be a farming district, but at the same time it is worthy of mention that this year there has been an exceptionally good yield of grain and vegetables grown in the district. In this section unless a farmer has irrigation he has no reasonable assurance that

17. Medicine Hat Times, January 10, 1895.

18. For further discussion see Chapter VI.

he will reap a crop, but if this is the case, he has also the assurance that if his crop does come to anything, he will not see...frost.¹⁹

Efforts to attract immigrants, by not only the federal government, but also the Northwest government and the community of Medicine Hat will be discussed against this local background.

ii

Since the basic purpose of the National Policy was the development and integration of a transcontinental national economy, a basic prerequisite was the rapid settlement of the newly acquired lands of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. This settlement was to provide the markets necessary to give impetus to the development of industry in the east, and to provide the traffic which would make the chief integrating factor---the Canadian Pacific Railway---economically feasible. Immigration, therefore, was one of the cornerstones of the National Policy from its inception.

The essential framework of the new Dominion's immigration policies had been worked out in the province of Canada even before Confederation. Responsibility for this important function had been placed in the provincial Department of Agriculture, and after Confederation was assumed by the Dominion Department of Agriculture. In 1872 Parliament passed an Act²⁰ which provided for the placing of agents in European and American cities to secure immigrants.

19. Medicine Hat News, October 17, 1895.

20. Statutes of Canada, 35 Vic., c. 29 (1872).

Also, although they had relatively little effect on settlement in the Northwest, the Act provided for the establishment of Immigration Aid Societies. In 1892 the Immigration Branch was transferred to the Department of the Interior. In addition to placing advertisements in European papers and magazines, distributing quantities of literature on the prospects of the Canadian plains as a region for settlers and maintaining immigration agencies, the Dominion government established a system of passenger warrants and a policy of paying commissions to passenger agents for immigrants they secured. In spite of the persistence of the efforts made by the federal government on behalf of immigration, the number of immigrants attracted before the turn of the century was very discouraging.²¹ After the Liberals were returned to power in 1896 Sir Clifford Sifton was put in charge of the Department of the Interior. The intensified efforts to secure immigrants which marked his administration of the Department, along with the apparent shift in migration patterns of emigrants from Europe, resulted in a marked increase in immigration to the Canadian Northwest.

Until 1888 the editor of the Times appears to have seen little to complain about in the policy of the federal government toward immigration. Although he had deplored Medicine Hat's lack of an immigration agent to assist settlers in establishing themselves,²²

21. V. C. Fowke, op. cit., p. 57.

22. Medicine Hat Times, April 8, 1886.

he condemned those who criticized the quality of immigrants that the agents of the government and the Canadian Pacific Railway attracted:

No matter what plan the government adopts it invariably raises a crop of critics....Now an objection is raised to pauper immigration.... The fact of the matter, we believe, is that no such immigration is brought into the country....On the whole, the class of people coming into the Northwest cannot well be improved. If they are deficient, in the knowledge necessary for a pioneer's life, the hard knocks they receive very soon set them to thinking and imitating their more successful neighbors. It is not in the interest of the government to bring out undesirable immigrants, nor is it the interest of the C.P.R.²³

In December of 1887 the Times carried a long article on the work of the government's agents in Britain. In this resume of their activities, the publishing of Professor Sheldon's report on Canada's agricultural resources, the government's pavilions at the Glasgow International exhibition and at the Royal Yorkshire Jubilee exhibition at Saltaire, along with the Canadian Pacific Railway's display at the Christmas stock show at Norwich, and the extensive advertizing in British papers were all mentioned.²⁴ A later project which was to receive similar praise in Medicine Hat was the Canadian and Northwest governments' display at the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. In numerous articles and editorials the paper explained

23. Medicine Hat Times, July 16, 1887.

24. Ibid., December 15, 1887.

how this would help not only to draw immigrants and capital to the Canadian west, but also to introduce the products of the Northwest to the markets of the world.²⁵ To illustrate the impact of the Canadian showing at the exhibition the paper reported that "of the \$30,000 offered in money by the directors of the Chicago exposition for livestock prizes, \$14,400 came to Canada."²⁶

A major concern in 1888 was the lack of attention that the government's agents overseas and in the United States appeared to be paying to the Medicine Hat area:

There seems to be a general understanding among the eastern people to utterly ignore the existence of the Medicine Hat and Maple Creek district. The advantages of the land in the vicinity of both places, as a field for immigrants, is studiously avoided, and other sections of much less natural value are complimented and referred to in the most gushing manner.²⁷

The action which had triggered this particular outburst was a tour of the Northwest by one of the government's agents, a Captain Clark. The purpose of this tour was to familiarize him with the areas to which he would be promoting immigration while overseas, and to the editor it seemed impossible for anyone making a tour of western Canada by railway to miss Medicine Hat by accident, as it was on the main line. This, in addition to the efforts of Manitoba agents to

25. For examples see the Medicine Hat Times, January 21, 1892, October 19, 1893, and October 26, 1893.

26. Medicine Hat Times, November 16, 1893.

27. Ibid., February 23, 1888.

discourage immigrants from continuing to the Northwest, prompted the Medicine Hat Board of Trade to send a request to the Minister of Agriculture "to see that our immigration agent, Mr. Sutherland, be authorized to go east and meet incoming settlers and induce them to settle in the Medicine Hat district."²⁸ Since the people had not yet come to accept the idea that their district was not ideally suited to agriculture, especially with the excellent crop of 1887 in mind, they were very loath to see other areas drawing nearly all of the immigrants.

Just as immigration to the area began to increase, another blow was received from what was beginning to look like a none too paternal government. In February the editor, while looking over the federal estimates, noticed that no provision was made for the continuation of the Medicine Hat immigration agency.²⁹ A memorial by the Board of Trade and questions in the House of Commons by N. F. Davin were of no avail and in April Mr. Sutherland was instructed to close the office and proceed to Vancouver.³⁰

With the closing of the Medicine Hat and other agencies in the Northwest, Davin, at the urging of the Northwest papers and Assembly, suggested that the government should use the money saved by this

28. Medicine Hat Times, September 7, 1888 and April 6, 1889.

29. Ibid., February 23, 1889.

30. Ibid., April 1, 1889.

move to arrange for special agents to be appointed in England and eastern provinces to work solely in the interests of immigration to the Territories.³¹ The government's policy, however, was to reduce expenditures and one of the services most severely affected was the Immigration Branch of the Department of the Interior. One of the most immediate results of this governmental parsimony was a noticeable reduction in the number of British immigrants as compared to previous years. The more aggressive policy of the Argentine Republic resulted in large numbers of British emigrants deciding to locate there.³² Naturally enough, such conditions brought a demand for a return to a policy of assisted immigration,³³ a policy which had been discontinued in 1888 as a result of the demands of working-men's associations in eastern Canada.³⁴

By 1890 the Medicine Hat Times was beginning to demand a thorough overhaul of the Immigration Bureau. Sir John Macdonald's address to the electors in the election of 1891 stated that the policy of the Conservative party was directed by a "firm determination to foster and develop the varied resources of the Dominion." "To that end," he continued, "we have laboured in the past and we propose to continue in the work to which we have applied ourselves of building upon the continent...a mighty and powerful nation."³⁵

31. Medicine Hat Times, April 13, 1889.

32. Ibid., March 20, 1890.

33. Ibid., February 13, 1890.

34. Ibid., February 23, 1888.

35. As quoted in the Medicine Hat Times, February 12, 1891.

This statement of purpose appeared to be particularly applicable to the field of immigration and the editor of the Times was not slow to point out that the needs not only of the west, but of the whole of Canada, demanded a more vigorous policy:

Slowly and with almost criminal reluctance Eastern statesmen and the Eastern press are beginning to see in the future development of the Great West much of Canada's promised greatness....Indeed, Western Canada is at present the best market the provinces of Ontario and Quebec have, and it is hard to understand their past opposition to the opening out of this country.³⁶

Drinnan continued by pointing out that although the opening of the west might temporarily depreciate the value of their farm lands, the easterners should have recognized that their future development depended largely upon the extension of their manufacturing interests. The hope of the west was that as this fact dawned upon them, there would be less apathy among eastern newspapers and members of Parliament toward the vital interests of the Northwest. For years, realizing that the future of their country depended entirely upon a large influx of settlers, westerners had been demanding that the government in Ottawa adopt a more liberal immigration policy in place of the existing one, which had obviously been such a failure. The editor therefore contended that the Immigration Bureau needed to be

36. Medicine Hat Times, December 3, 1891.

separated from the Department of Agriculture and placed under an energetic minister who thoroughly understood the capabilities and needs of the whole country and who also had an intimate knowledge of where to seek desirable immigrants. Furthermore, it was hoped that he would not be handicapped for want of funds, for money properly spent in promoting desirable immigration would be the best investment Canada had ever made.

Even before the election, the same thought had been evident in an editorial on the policy which the member for Western Assiniboia should pursue in Parliament. When discussing the matter of their member's position with regard to immigration, the editor pointed out that "the Dominion government [had] spent millions in setting up its older provinces, and the youngest on the list [was] certainly entitled to similar treatment."³⁷

Even when the Immigration Bureau was placed under the Department of the Interior, rather than being made a separate department, the editor still felt that the desired changes were likely to be made. The respect which Drinnan held for Dewdney led him to believe that an energetic deputy would be appointed to head the bureau, one who would remove inefficient agents and replace them with men who would make the most of the opportunities afforded by the crop

37. Medicine Hat Times, February 12, 1891.

failures which so many European nations were experiencing.³⁸ It was with some disappointment then, that the news was received that Deputy Minister Burgess, an official already carrying heavy duties, was to be the new head of the Bureau. Along with this announcement came the information that there would be no increase in the already insufficient appropriation for immigration work, and that immigration matters were to be handled through the land offices. There is a note of despair in the editorial which appeared following the above announcements:

For the past twenty years or more, Canada has blundered in her immigration policy, and from present indications, notwithstanding the fact that these blunders have been pointed out time and again, it seems probable she will continue blundering for some time to come. Were it not for the businesslike management of the Canadian Pacific Railway immigration department and its excellent results, the people of Canada would soon recognize the futility of the parsimonious efforts put forth by the government to induce settlers to come to the country.³⁹

An interesting point of comparison was presented in the report of the federal estimates in regard to the Northwest for 1892. It was reported that while the sum of \$768,925 was voted for Indian affairs in the Northwest, only \$197,325 was voted to support immigration activities. Also, that after all the concern which the federal government had manifested in the problem of attracting greater numbers

38. Medicine Hat Times, March 10, 1892.

39. Ibid., July 7, 1892.

of immigrants, the vote for immigration purposes had been exactly the same as for the year before.⁴⁰

The government did heed the demands of western Canada to some extent, and in the following year attempted to carry out a more vigorous immigration policy. This policy, however, did not achieve particularly notable results for the number of homestead entries in the west, which had reached a high of just over four thousand in 1893, dropped steadily until a low of under two thousand was reached in 1896.⁴¹ At the beginning of 1894, the Times announced that the Manitoba government, which had been pursuing a very active immigration policy, had decided to stop it altogether because, as was frankly stated in the legislature, while the present protective policy of the Dominion was maintained there was not sufficient return on their investment.⁴² This theme, the effect of the protective tariff on immigration, was a constant one during the ensuing years.

An editorial in the Medicine Hat News in 1896 presents the essence of this argument clearly and concisely. It was argued that while the Dominion government spent a very considerable sum in

40. Medicine Hat Times, March 24, 1892.

41. W. A. Mackintosh, Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces p. 2 and C. C. Lingard, Territorial Government in Canada, Table IV.

42. Medicine Hat Times, January 18, 1894.

advertising the country and inducing emigrants to come to Canada, the results were, and always had been, unsatisfactory. F. G. Forster bluntly stated:

...it is utterly of no use to spend good money in advertising a good country like the Northwest and then when we get the people into the country, to keep them penuriously poor in their endeavors to earn an honest livelihood, and at the same time pay their share of tribute towards the coffers of protected and fostered manufacturers and monopolists in the east.⁴³

In continuing, he noted that the tariff, which was of benefit to Ontario and Quebec, was a serious drawback to Manitoba and the Northwest, as it made the necessities of pioneer life extremely expensive. If the people of the Northwest had a moderate cost of living, combined with the advantages with which nature had endowed the country, then their lot would have been a happy one, and as such would have furnished a better and more practical immigration advertisement than all the travelling agents and lecturers that the government could put into the field.

iii

Throughout the whole period the Medicine Hat papers devoted a considerable portion of their space and energy to promoting immigration to the area. Articles were written pointing out every

43. Medicine Hat News, February 13, 1896.

conceivable advantage that the Medicine Hat district and the Territories at large possessed, and comparing the relatively favorable state of affairs which existed there to such less favored areas as eastern Canada, the United States and most of the countries of Europe. These articles were not, of course, intended for local consumption; rather it was hoped that some would be reprinted by papers and magazines elsewhere and that local subscribers would send copies to their friends and acquaintances in the places they had come from.⁴⁴ Also, from time to time, special issues were published which were either distributed by Dominion or Northwest immigration agents or by the local people who were sent east, on passes granted by the Canadian Pacific Railway, to promote immigration from more settled parts of Canada. In addition, the Times and the Medicine Hat Board of Trade co-operated in publishing a special pamphlet in 1889 to distribute through immigration agents or to any prospective settler or investor who inquired about the area.⁴⁵

An interesting feature of these articles has been mentioned before. The earlier articles presented Medicine Hat as the best locality for virtually any venture. Not until a considerable number of settlers and a few investors had taken the editors at their word,

44. Medicine Hat Times, April 10, 1890.

45. Ibid., March 9, 1889.

and failed, was it realized that every settler or investor who was forced to leave due to failure became a liability to the development of the country, even in respect to those endeavors for which it was eminently suited. Gradually, then, the articles advertizing the prospects for settlement and investment became more realistic. An excellent illustration of this changed attitude can be found in the reaction of the editor of the News to the discovery of gold along the South Saskatchewan river in 1894. Instead of playing it up as a major gold rush, the paper merely noted that gold had been found and listed the value of the gold gleaned by various outfits during the summer.⁴⁶

The relative lack of success of the Dominion government, in attracting immigrants, led the editor of the Times to suggest action by the Northwest Assembly as early as 1889.⁴⁷ In 1890 Royal's minority executive appointed a man named Cullen to solicit settlers from England, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Moldavia, Romania, Southern Russia and Bessarabia⁴⁸ but were unable to mount an extensive campaign for immigrants due to a lack of funds.⁴⁹ Even this effort appeared to have been ill-advised as there is some doubt

46. Medicine Hat Times, January 3, 1895.

47. Ibid., October 3, 1889.

48. Ibid., February 27, 1890 and March 27, 1890.

49. Ibid., November 13, 1890.

that Cullen did more than take credit for immigrants who had already decided to come, and with whom he had never had any contact.⁵⁰ Plans were also laid for the compilation of a Northwest immigration pamphlet to give information to prospective immigrants about the Territories.⁵¹ The pamphlet was completed in 1891 and apparently widely distributed.⁵² Another project first suggested in 1891 was the holding of a territorial exhibition.⁵³ Senator Perley, who was credited with the initiation of the idea, saw it as a way of bringing the agricultural, ranching and manufacturing possibilities of the Northwest to the attention of the world at large. Although the idea received considerable support, no definite steps were taken to put the plan into effect until after Charles Mackintosh became Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories.⁵⁴ The exhibition, finally held in 1895, coincided with an excellent crop in most of the Territories, and consequently impressed the visitors and reporters alike.

One indirect means by which the Northwest Assembly tried to project a favorable image of the Territories, to possible settlers, was by keeping taxation as low as was possible, while still providing the most basic services. In the Speech from the Throne in 1895, Lieutenant-Governor Mackintosh said:

50. Medicine Hat Times, November 27, 1890 and November 13, 1890.

51. Ibid., March 27, 1890.

52. Ibid., December 17, 1891.

53. Ibid., February 19, 1891.

54. Ibid., February 15, 1894.

It is of importance that thrifty settlers and artisans should fill our fields and factories before the rule of making prosperity bear a portion of the burden [of taxation] is applied. A community out of debt naturally possesses attractions for those looking for homes. The Canadian North West Territories should be made a cheap country to live in; hence, to avoid local taxation as much as possible, and to discount the future only after moderate rates have populated the lands, may be considered a reasonable as well as practical policy.⁵⁵

As many services were necessary even in a frontier area, and since the level of local taxation was nowhere near sufficient to cover their cost, demands for increasingly larger subsidies were made on the federal government.

Finally, one rather important feature of efforts by the North-west government to attract settlers was that most of its attention was devoted to eastern Canada.⁵⁶ Two reasons for this exist. The first was that free passes, granted by the Canadian Pacific Railway to immigration "delegates," made this form of soliciting settlers relatively cheap. The second, and possibly more important reason, was that settlers from eastern Canada adjusted more readily to local conditions than many of the European settlers.

iv

Although not willing to incorporate, and thereby make possible a sustained local effort to attract investment and immigration, the citizens of Medicine Hat were willing to undertake a number of pro-

55. As quoted in the Medicine Hat Times, September 5, 1895.

56. For example, in 1893 fifty-nine "delegates" were soliciting settlers in eastern Canada under this plan (Medicine Hat Times, February 9, 1893). One of their number was J. K. Drinnan, editor of the Times (Medicine Hat Times, March 23, 1893).

jects, which while often benefitting local citizens, improved the district's ability to attract settlers and investment. Probably the two best examples of local initiative were the building of the hospital and the attempt to develop the town's natural gas reserves. When it was opened on June 4, 1890, the Medicine Hat Hospital was the only institution of its kind between Winnipeg and the Pacific coast.⁵⁷ A hospital insurance scheme was also instituted which, for a payment of five dollars per year, would entitle the user to free lodging, board, nursing and medical attention during the year.⁵⁸ That the hospital was considered an important institution in the Territories, is amply attested to by the generous support given to it from as far away as Edmonton in the north, Regina in the east and Donald in the west.⁵⁹

In an effort to draw attention to the problems, as well as to the possibilities, of the west, the Medicine Hat Times and the Medicine Hat Board of Trade promoted the idea of holding a Northwest convention in conjunction with the opening of the hospital.⁶⁰ In proposing the idea the editor wrote:

Such a convention would afford a convenient opportunity for discussing the question of forming a platform for the Northwest on which both Liberal-

57. Medicine Hat Times, May 29, 1890 and June 5, 1890.

58. Ibid., December 19, 1890.

59. Ibid., October 15, 1891.

60. Ibid., March 27, 1890.

Conservatives and Reformers could unite. The time would seem to be ripe for such action, and it is time now, that the politics of the Dominion have become nothing more than a scramble either for office or Government grants, that the people of the Northwest should take some action to prevent their interests being ignored in order that the greed and craving for self-aggrandizement of eastern politicians may be gratified.⁶¹

Even though the idea received widespread editorial support in the west, the convention itself was not a success. Each constituency of the Northwest Assembly was asked to send four delegates, but when the convention opened, only ten delegates from outside the Medicine Hat constituency were in attendance.⁶² This was the last time, during this period, that Medicine Hat took the initiative in trying to promote western action to solve the problems of the Territories.

In an effort to foster the image of a developing manufacturing and industrial center, the people of Medicine Hat undertook a project which, while only moderately successful at the time, was to pave the way for much of the community's later development. Natural gas had been known to exist in the area for a considerable period of time. Therefore, a suggestion by Canadian Pacific officials that a sure supply of the fuel could pave the way for the development of greenhouses, and the offer of a boring machine to make a test,

61. Medicine Hat Times, April 17, 1890.

62. Ibid., June 5, 1890.

resulted in a local company being formed to drill a test well in 1891.⁶³ Although an abundant flow of gas was obtained, there was too much moisture in it to provide a dependable supply for large-scale commercial use. It was not until after 1900 that an enterprising citizen discovered, that by drilling deeper, a natural gas could be found which was dryer and contained fewer impurities.

A Board of Trade and an Agricultural society were formed in 1887 at the urging of B. J. McMahon, the editor of the Times. Both organizations, however, drew their support from the business community only. Consequently, after two years of trying to enlist support from the community at large for projects to improve and publicize Medicine Hat, they were forced to curtail their activities. The majority of the citizens were not interested in costly improvement or advertizing schemes as their income was derived from the railway. Therefore, they feared that improved public services, while possibly helping the town to grow, would merely increase their cost of living. The Agricultural Society was more successful as the farmers and ranchers recognized the value, to them, of the annual fairs. In addition, both the Northwest and Dominion governments gave liberal annual grants to the society.

Besides the lack of co-operative effort to draw settlers to the Medicine Hat area, there were a few instances of outright discourage-

63. Medicine Hat Times, September 17, 1891.

ment of settlement. One of the most obvious of these was the evident prejudice exhibited against various nationalities by the local population. While the community desired the development of its resources of coal, the editor made it obvious that the Hungarians who were brought in to work the mines were not considered to be particularly desirable citizens.⁶⁴ In 1887 a Mormon colony was encouraged, as long as polygamy was not practised.⁶⁵ Later, however, the attitude of the editors must have changed as a number of editorials and letters to the editor appeared that were highly critical of the Mormons.⁶⁶ Another group who, even by their unassuming manner, did not escape criticism were the Chinese, especially after a Chinese laundryman in Calgary died of smallpox.⁶⁷ The preferred settlers, according to the editors, were native Canadians from the east, Americans, Englishmen and Scots. German and Icelandic settlers also appeared to be welcome.

In 1890, in an editorial on immigration, J. K. Drinnan stated:

In the mad rush to secure settlers, the Northwest like other new countries has thrown its gates wide open to all nationalities and creeds. While the settlement of our broad prairies is certainly a thing to be desired, yet when the attempt is made to blend these various

64. Medicine Hat Times, December 25, 1886.

65. Ibid., August 20, 1887.

66. For examples see Medicine Hat Times, July 20, 1888, October 19, 1888, December 24, 1889, January 30, 1890, and February 13, 1890.

67. Medicine Hat Times, May 7, 1887 and July 14, 1892.

nationalities with their inherited prejudices against each other into one nation our liberal immigration policy may not be looked upon as an unmixed blessing.⁶⁸

The editor went on to quote from an article by Goldwin Smith which characterized the Icelandic, Mennonite and Mormon immigrants as undesirable, and concluded that "what the Northwest wants is the Canadian immigration which is now peopling Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, and Washington Territory."⁶⁹

In 1888 the editor brought to light another serious impediment to settlement in the vicinity of Medicine Hat:

They [the farmers already in the area] say they don't want any more farmers as it would ruin their market. On this account these grasping and self-conceited tillers of the rich soil of the South Saskatchewan valley refuse to give certain information that would tend to induce settlement. To the contrary they prefer to circulate reports that the country is worthless; that a man needs a national bank at his back to exist on a farm three years anywhere in the vicinity.⁷⁰

While the editor was as prone to prejudice against certain groups of immigrants as were the rest of the local citizens, he regarded the settlement of the area as a necessity. He pointed out that the merchants had purchased the products of these farmers, even though these same products could be imported from elsewhere for as much as one-third less, in order to encourage the local producers. If these

68. Medicine Hat Times, January 9, 1890.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., March 1, 1888.

farmers were going to repay the assistance tendered them by ruining the reputation of the country, then Holt felt that the merchants obviously owed them no further consideration and should refuse to purchase their produce.

In conclusion, it should be noted that there were many factors working against rapid settlement of the Medicine Hat area between 1885 and 1896. Such international factors as recurring periods of depression, coupled with the abundance of opportunity for settlement and investment in Africa and South America, as well as in the United States and Canada, affected the rate of development in all the areas vying for immigrants. Also, the fact that there were still lands available in the better known American west undoubtedly gave the United States an advantage. Eastern Canada, already burdened by the generous assistance it had advanced to the Canadian Pacific Railway, did not appear willing to underwrite an expensive campaign for immigrants. This was especially so in a period when depression was forcing the curtailment of projects which appeared to have more immediate benefits for easterners. The Northwest government, largely dependent on federal grants in a period when it was trying to keep local taxation to a minimum, was unable to initiate an extensive advertising and recruiting campaign. Climatic conditions in the Medicine Hat area made agriculture a doubtful venture without an expensive large-scale irrigation system. Finally, due to a lack of local initiative and co-operation, even the limited flow of

settlers that came west, by-passed Medicine Hat for areas that were better known or had a better reputation. In 1892 J. K. Drinnan wrote:

Train loads after train loads of settlers and settler's effects are arriving in the country....Medicine Hat so far has scarcely received a settler. Let us inquire for a moment into the cause....In natural advantages this district does not suffer from comparison with other sections of the Territories, and we must seek further for the cause of the present dearth of immigration. We believe the chief, if not the sole reason, we are not receiving our fair share of the immigration to the Northwest this season is because this district has never been properly advertised. Moosejaw, Calgary, Edmonton and Regina districts, into which the tide of immigration is flowing, have all been well advertised by pamphlets and through agents....If this district is ever to be settled up its advantages must be made known to intending emigrants and this can only be done by the united efforts of the present inhabitants.⁷¹

Although it was only through rapid settlement of the west that the National Policy could achieve its goals, all these factors, in addition to other facets of the National Policy, tended to preclude large-scale immigration. Rapid settlement of the west in general, and to a more moderate extent, the Medicine Hat area, did not come until a more aggressive immigration policy was initiated by the new Liberal government that took office in 1896.

71. Medicine Hat Times, April 7, 1892.

CHAPTER VI

TARIFFS AND TRADE POLICY

The program of economic nationalism envisioned by the National Policy was rounded out by the adoption of a protective tariff in 1879. This program, which included industrial development, western settlement, railways and the tariff had been developing since the mid-nineteenth century.

From the time of Confederation until 1879 the emphasis had been on the revenue aspect of tariffs: raw materials and many semi-finished goods entered the country free of duty; a duty of fifteen per cent ad valorem, raised in 1874 to seventeen and one-half per cent, was levied on most manufactured goods; somewhat higher rates were charged on luxury goods. The marked decline in prosperity after 1873, however, threatened the revenues of the new Dominion. When the full force of depression was felt in 1876, some solution to the problem of declining revenues became necessary, if the Dominion was to meet its heavy burden of indebtedness, assumed at Confederation and enlarged through later public works, and still continue with the task of building a viable Canadian nation. The infant industries of the country were equally affected by the depression. Falling prices of manufactured goods in Great Britain and the United States, along with declining transportation costs,

were exposing them to increasingly stiff competition. If the country was to build a strong industrial base, manufacturers claimed that they could not afford to share the domestic market with these lower-priced imported goods. These factors, along with a growth of national consciousness which was rooted in an increasingly anti-American sentiment throughout the Dominion, led the Conservative party to adopt a policy of protection during the campaign for three by-elections in 1876.¹

During the session of 1878, John A. Macdonald moved in the House of Commons that:

...this House is of the opinion that the welfare of Canada requires the adoption of a National Policy, which, by a judicious readjustment of the Tariff, will benefit and foster the agricultural, the mining, the manufacturing and other interests of the Dominion.²

In justifying the motion, he argued:

The resolution speaks not only of a reasonable adjustment of the tariff but of the encouragement and development of interprovincial trade. That is one of the greatest objects we should seek to attain....I believe that, by a fair readjustment of the tariff, we can increase the various industries which we can interchange one with another, and make this union a union in interest, a union in trade, and a union in feeling.³

The election promise of 1878 was put into effect in the session of 1879. This new tariff raised the general duty on items not other-

1. Donald Creighton, op. cit., V. II, p. 223.

2. Commons Debates, 1878, p. 854.

3. Ibid., p. 861.

wise specified from seventeen and one-half per cent to twenty per cent, and introduced a much wider range of highly protective specific duties. These protective tariffs continued to be raised until 1887 and, with only slight modification, remained until 1930.

At the time that protection was introduced, the federal government derived the largest part of its revenue from tariffs. As the introduction of protection coincided with renewed plans for a transcontinental railway, the two policies became inextricably linked in the program for western development. While the railway provided the physical facilities for east-west trade, the tariff would encourage domestic production by preventing competition from foreign goods. This would guarantee the success of the transcontinental road, and the revenue derived from the higher duties could be used to provide subsidies for the railway, or to meet deficits incurred by its operation during the initial years of sparse settlement in the west. Thus the policy of fostering interprovincial trade between an increasingly industrialized east and a settled agricultural west, over a transcontinental system of transportation, was to be ensured by a protective tariff. It should be noted that although the protective tariff was necessary to make an all-Canadian railway economically feasible, western development did not necessarily depend on such a system of transportation. Without protection and the monopoly clause of the Canadian Pacific Railway's charter, American lines could have

successfully built feeder lines into Manitoba and the Northwest, thereby drawing the trade of this area to their main lines.

As the west was almost completely unsettled when the tariffs of 1879 were established, "the prairie economy grew up within a pre-established framework of tariffs which shaped, limited and curtailed its development."⁴ Since the greatest market, labor supply, amount of available capital and developed resources for manufacturing existed in the east, that area had an almost insurmountable advantage in attracting new industry. Therefore, while the tariff provided little scope for western industrial development, it had the effect of prejudicing western opportunities of developing an adequate export trade in agricultural products and raw materials because of the higher costs of production which it occasioned. Recognition of this fact probably underlay the demand by the Territorial Council in 1886 that a rebate, equal to the duty imposed on agricultural implements and lumber, be given to westerners.⁵ Even the Conservative party in the west found it expedient to include a plank in its platform, for the election of 1887, which dealt with the subject of tariff reform:

We are of the opinion that the custom tariff should be so amended as to remove from the shoulders of the producers of wealth in this country the unfair proportion of taxation now imposed upon them. We believe agricultural implements and other necessary articles

4. V. C. Fowke, op. cit., p. 67.

5. Medicine Hat Times, February 18, 1886.

so largely used in an almost exclusively agricultural country should be taxed for revenue purposes only and not for the protection of manufacturers so long as said articles are manufactured outside the limit of these Territories.⁶

In 1888 the Times carried an article which clearly indicated the feelings of the editor with regard to the tariff aspect of the National Policy. This article noted that while all admitted protection had been a great help to Canada as a whole, it was the eastern provinces in particular that had benefitted. Industries that had been unthought of in Canada before the National Policy were being developed, and the Northwest had done its share in assisting in the general welfare. The author felt, however, that it should have been, by then, the turn of the Northwest. The Territories would receive the greatest benefit from being allowed to obtain manufactured goods from the cheapest market, thereby enabling the farmers and stock raisers to produce products for export at a lower price. The article ended with the comment that "as the manufacturers in eastern Canada [had] had a good share of protection they ought...to be able to compete with the outside world."⁷ In 1895 the Patron candidate, McInnis, summed up the disillusionment felt by the people of the Territories in regard to the protective tariff. That policy:

6. Medicine Hat Times, November 27, 1886.

7. Ibid., January 26, 1888.

...it was prophesied would fill the land with tall chimneys and would set the wheels of industry moving throughout the length and breadth of the land. It was to fill the vast prairies with people....We were told that the main object was to give the infant industries a lift, and to enable them to compete with the people south of us, and that when these objects were obtained, protection would be withdrawn. We have waited for that prosperity, and have waited in vain.⁸

ii

The early recognition in Manitoba and the Northwest that the protective tariffs which benefitted eastern industries impeded western development, led to considerable support for the commercial union movement. By June of 1887 the Medicine Hat Times was asking, editorially, why the Board of Trade had not expressed itself on the issue.⁹ In July the paper reported that "in a careful perusal we find that 99 businessmen out of every 100 in the Northwest are strongly in favor of commercial union;"¹⁰ in October the editor wrote that "Commercial Union may not be just what is wanted throughout Canada, but if the people would like to see the Northwest leap into immediate prosperity, just give us unrestricted reciprocity."¹¹ By December, however, Holt appeared to be developing some doubts about the wisdom of commercial union with the United States. In reporting a meeting held in Medicine Hat by N. F. Davin, the local member of Parliament, he wrote:

8. Medicine Hat Times, April 4, 1895.

9. Ibid., June 25, 1887.

10. Ibid., July 30, 1887.

11. Ibid., October 6, 1887.

His [Davin's] strong opposition to commercial union we may accept as an index to how he would like us to feel towards it. Our people, however, are hardly sufficiently posted yet on the subject and it is a matter of too great importance to discuss in public without thoroughly understanding it.¹²

Consequently, the editor made a determined attempt to bring a wide range of points of view before his readers. In October he had given an American viewpoint on commercial union from a correspondent in Butte City, Montana, expressing the idea that annexation was inevitable if Canadian monopolists continued to depress the fortunes of Manitoba and the Northwest.¹³ Another editorial advocated unrestricted reciprocity as a solution to the fisheries dispute.¹⁴ Early in 1888 the Times reported in detail the arguments for and against the Liberal motion in Parliament for "unrestricted trade reciprocity" with the United States.¹⁵ Finally, an article of January 26, 1888 itemized the arguments against commercial union as given by an apparent supporter of the National Policy.¹⁶

By April of 1888, however, Holt appears to have satisfied any misgivings which he may have had on the subject of reciprocity. In discussing N. F. Davin's vote against reciprocity in the House of Commons the editor wrote:

12. Medicine Hat Times, December 29, 1887.

13. Ibid., October 13, 1887.

14. Ibid., November 3, 1887.

15. Ibid., April 12, 1888.

16. Ibid., January 26, 1888.

He [Davin] should always bear in mind the fact that the people in the Northwest have it in their power to elect him, and not the ringsters of the Dominion capital. He is the representative of Western Assiniboia and he should voice its sentiments. We believe his opinions on reciprocity are adverse to the opinions of the people he represents. Great minds differ on great subjects, and this is the position in which the TIMES stands with Mr. Davin, M.P., on reciprocity.¹⁷

For the remainder of the period that the Times remained under the control of D. G. Holt, the paper continued to support unrestricted reciprocity in a very forceful manner.¹⁸ In his eyes, the high cost of production and the high cost of living in the west were a direct result of protective tariffs and the virtual monopoly of the Canadian Pacific Railway in western transportation. By thus worsening the financial condition of the settlers already in the west, and thereby giving that region an unfavorable reputation among intending settlers, the editor reasoned, the railway and the manufacturing interests of the east merely prejudiced their interests as well as those of the Territories. On the other hand, unrestricted reciprocity was viewed as an agent for the creation of a continental market for the producers of the Northwest, thereby bringing such prosperity as would attract settlers from all over the world. This point of view, while failing to take a number of important factors into account, achieved considerable popularity in the Medicine Hat area. The enactment of the

17. Medicine Hat Times, April 12, 1888.

18. In the Medicine Hat Times the terms unrestricted reciprocity and commercial union were used interchangeably. The Times in its issue of February 26, 1891 stated that "Commercial Union [is] the American term for unrestricted reciprocity."

McKinley tariff in 1890,¹⁹ however, caused an upsurge of anti-American feeling, one of the casualties of which was the commercial union movement.

iii

When J. K. Drinnan took over the Medicine Hat Times in March of 1889, a somewhat different theme became evident. Although he still reprinted a few articles from other sources which favored unrestricted reciprocity, the new editor appeared to recognize that important interests in Canada would suffer from such a policy. For instance, although the Times carried an article²⁰ by Goldwin Smith which contained a favorable reference to commercial union, the purpose of the reprint was to exemplify what the editor thought was a mistake in the federal government's immigration policy.

Other signs of this change in sentiment appeared in the paper from time to time. One article noted that, while the country's foreign trade had totaled \$153,455,682 in 1879, it had risen to \$204,413,000 in 1889. Drinnan was moved to comment:

In other words, under ten years of Conservative government we have added over fifty million dollars to the wealth of the country. Is this not prosperity? Would reciprocity with the States show better results?²¹

19. Medicine Hat Times, October 23, 1890.

20. Ibid., January 9, 1890.

21. Ibid., January 23, 1890.

Early in the election campaign of 1891, when speaking of the needs of the Northwest, the editor wrote that "the Northwest wants unrestricted reciprocity with the United States or if it is decided that this is not for the general welfare of Canada then the Territories are entitled to an equivalent in the shape of a greatly enlarged grant."²² The manner in which the issue of unrestricted reciprocity was mentioned gives the impression that the editor merely considered it to be a good bargaining point to secure other advantages for the Northwest.

Just before the election, however, the editor made his sentiments obvious in an editorial entitled "Annexation or British Connection:"

Never before was such a momentous issue as the present one placed before the electors of Canada. The question is one on which hinges the whole future of our country. It is a question of whether by adopting the policy of the Liberal party---unrestricted reciprocity---we shall pave the way for annexation and ultimately become part and parcel of the republic to the south of us, or whether by remaining loyal to Canada and the British connection we take a hand in working out our own future. We have no hesitation in declaring for the latter.²³

To prove his contention that unrestricted reciprocity would ultimately lead to annexation, Drinnan proceeded to quote from the speeches of the leaders of the commercial union movement in both Canada and the

22. Medicine Hat Times, February 12, 1891.

23. Ibid., February 26, 1891.

United States. The clear implication of all the quotations was that the United States, once it had integrated the Canadian economy into a continental system, would be highly unlikely to allow Canadian policy to interfere with the best interests of its larger and more economically powerful partner. "On the other hand," he pointed out, "by giving us free access to American markets any measure of unrestricted reciprocity would benefit Western Canada."²⁴ Drinnan was convinced, however, that the west would be willing to waive its desire for unrestricted reciprocity, provided the provinces whose interests would be destroyed by its adoption were also willing to make sacrifices, and not oppose western demands for liberal expenditures on immigration and other means of developing the vast resources of the Territories. If this were done, he had no hesitation in recommending that Canada retain her independence and work out her destiny under the protection of the mother country.

Although Drinnan was doubtlessly influenced by Sir John's stirring appeal to Canadian nationalism in his address to the electors, made two weeks earlier, his opposition to commercial union had been apparent for more than a year before the election. Less than three months after the election the editor of the Times quoted a section from a speech by Senator Cullom, the chairman of the Inter-

24. Medicine Hat Times, February 26, 1891.

State Commerce Commission, which to him at least, proved that the United States had no intention of allowing Canada to remain an independent nation. In the editorial the champion of the McKinley tariff was quoted as saying:

We must make war on Canada...until the Canadian people elect a Government that will reverse Sir John Macdonald's policy. We do not want to conquer Canada by force of arms, but we must make war upon her commercial, transportation and industrial interests, until the people insist upon meeting us half way in a scheme of adjustment. Ultimately we want, and must have, Canada herself.²⁵

Such a candid statement of American intentions merely served to confirm the editor's worst suspicions. By 1892 Drinnan was convinced that:

Commercial reciprocity with the United States...is now a dead issue, since it cannot be obtained except through political union. This step we are not prepared to take; this step Canada is not prepared to advocate.²⁶

The victory of the Democrats in the American elections later that year appeared to hold out the promise of better trade relations between Canada and the United States. This, along with the continuing agitation against what even many eastern Canadians were coming to view as overly protective tariffs, led the people of the Northwest to hope for some measure of tariff reform.²⁷

Early in 1893, recognizing the increasing demand in the Northwest for tariff reform, N. F. Davin rose in Parliament to move:

25. Medicine Hat Times, May 28, 1891.

26. Ibid., July 14, 1892.

27. Ibid., November 17, 1892.

...that in the opinion of this house the duty on barbed wire, on agricultural implements, on coal oil and cotton should be reduced so as to give no more than reasonable protection, and that the duty on binder twine should be abolished.²⁸

This motion proved to be so popular with his constituents that he received a large number of petitions, which he subsequently presented to Parliament, requesting that a reduction of ten per cent be made on the duties on agricultural implements and that binder twine, barbed wire, coal oil and cotton be placed on the free list.²⁹ By the end of the year Davin was advocating a "scientific system of protection" which he defined as one that would protect the infant industries without leaving the farmers at the mercy of eastern monopolists.³⁰ At his annual meeting with the electors that year, the member for Western Assiniboia received the only overwhelming vote of confidence that the people of Medicine Hat ever gave him. To the people of Medicine Hat it was a novel experience to hear their Conservative member declare:

One of his greatest reasons for going in for tariff reform was that the present customs duties pressed heavier on the farmer than on any other class, while it did not protect them in any way. It was absurd to talk of protecting the farmer, especially the Western one, as there was always a surplus of the products of the farm, and the market which regulates the price of these products is outside the sphere of the Canadian parliament's control.³¹

28. Medicine Hat Times, February 16, 1893.

29. Ibid., March 9, 1893.

30. Ibid., December 21, 1893.

31. Ibid., December 28, 1893.

That the editor of the Times was pleased with the change that had been wrought in the local member was clear from the headline given to the report of the meeting; it read "Medicine Hat Votes Confidence in the Northwest Champion of Tariff Reform."³²

Throughout the year Drinnan watched closely for every sign of a change of policy on the part of the government. The announcement by the Premier, Sir John Thompson, that a sweeping reduction of customs duties had been incorporated in the government's policy, was greeted with unbounded enthusiasm.³³ The editor hailed the decision as welcome news to the country in general, and in particular, to those supporters of the Conservative party who had begun to waver in their allegiance to a government which, seemingly, had persisted in maintaining a high tariff in the face of the expressed wishes of the people and in deference to the claims of what were characterized as "grasping monopolists." In an editorial on the change in the government's policy,³⁴ the editor noted that while a reduction in the tariff would undoubtedly benefit the whole of Canada, it was the western provinces which would reap the greatest advantages. Since the west was an area without manufacturing interests, it had nothing to lose and everything to gain by lower import duties. As well as bringing a

32. Medicine Hat Times, December 28, 1893.

33. Ibid., September 21, 1893.

34. Ibid.

greater measure of prosperity to the settlers already in the west, such a change was expected to assist Canadian efforts to procure immigrants. Principally because of her lower customs duties, Canada had always been advertized to prospective emigrants as a cheaper place to live than the United States. The accession to power of the Democratic party in that country was expected to bring a reduction in American tariffs, and if Canada was to maintain her reputation in that respect, it was necessary for her to meet the tariff reduction of her neighbor with tariff reduction at home.

After announcing the decision to introduce tariff reforms, the government made a serious tactical error. Two cabinet ministers, Foster and Angers, were dispatched to western Canada to hear grievances on the matter. Although numerous deputations reiterated the demand for tariff reform, the ministers returned to Ottawa and announced "that after thoroughly investigating the matter, they found the people of the Northwest had no grievances."³⁵ Retribution, in the form of the defeat of the government candidate in a Winnipeg by-election, came soon afterward. In reporting the election defeat Drinnan wrote:

The people of the Northwest have received many insults from Ottawa, but this is the grossest of them all, and we are much mistaken if they do not resent it at the polls whenever the opportunity presents itself.³⁶

35. Medicine Hat Times, November 30, 1893.

36. Ibid.

Early in 1894 the Medicine Hat Times ceased publication and was replaced by the Medicine Hat News. The early editorials of this paper followed much the same theme, although a progressive disillusionment with the unfulfilled promises of the government soon became evident. Foster's budget speech in March of 1894 was enthusiastically received. The editor reported that:

A reduction of ten per cent has been made in duties of agricultural implements; considerable reduction has also been made in iron and this the Government expects will reduce the cost of implements; binder twine and coal oil remain unchanged; and lumber, as a concession to Manitoba has been placed on the free list. A reduction has also been made in woolen and cotton schedules.³⁷

Although the same duties remained on binder twine and coal oil, these changes went a considerable way towards meeting the demands of the Northwest. A. M. R. Gordon wrote:

The Government has probably hit as near the juste milieu--the happy mean---between extreme protection, which has become intolerable, and free trade, which would be ruinous, as they could possibly do---being only human.³⁸

The News did, however, give considerable prominence to a speech by Sir Richard Cartwright, in which he claimed that Manitoba and the Northwest had not been fairly treated in the schedule of tariff reforms. He felt that they deserved more consideration as they had additional difficulties to overcome, for example, the plan of the

37. Medicine Hat News, March 29, 1894.

38. Ibid., April 5, 1894.

Argentine Republic to put between fifty-five and one hundred million bushels of wheat on the English market, that year, at sixty cents a bushel.³⁹

The reductions made in 1894, as well as the promise of important changes to be introduced the following year, served to satisfy the editor of the News, at least for a time, with the tariff policy of the government. A visit to Medicine Hat by Wilfrid Laurier, in October of 1894, however, appears to have changed the editor's views.⁴⁰ Whether it was the effect of the interest which the Liberal leader showed for the problems of the Northwest or whether it was the growing disenchantment of the new editor with the local Conservative member of parliament⁴¹ which brought this change of sentiment, is not clear. Irrespective of the reason for the change, Gordon, who praised Laurier highly, greeted the proposal of a tour of the west by a team of Conservative Cabinet ministers with scant enthusiasm:

If it did no more good than did the visit of Messers. Foster and Angers last fall, it would be better left undone. The people in the Northwest, particularly in the farming parts, have something in the way of a grievance against an irksome tariff that requires a trifle more than the advice of Cabinet Ministers to "go into mixed farming," to alleviate. What we want is a continuance of the work on tariff reductions commenced last session, not a costly electioneering tour.⁴²

39. Medicine Hat News, April 5, 1894.

40. Ibid., September 27, 1894.

41. Ibid., August 30, 1894.

42. Ibid.

The disenchantment with the Conservative administration continued to grow throughout 1895 and 1896, partly as a result of their failure to enact further tariff reforms of significance to the west, and to an even greater extent, as a result of the administration's failure to consider the interests of the west with regard to the live cattle and sheep trade and the Manitoba school question.

iv

By 1888 the ranching industry had become extremely important to the well-being of the Medicine Hat area, and after that date cattle and sheep exports provided a considerable part of the income of ranchers and settlers alike. Two markets, British Columbia and Great Britain, assumed overwhelming importance in the minds of the people of the Northwest. Therefore, the protection and extension of exports to these markets was a matter of great concern to the editor of the Medicine Hat paper.

The export of live cattle to Great Britain began in the fall of 1888,⁴³ and as it proved to be very profitable, continued to gain in importance until the end of 1892. Early in 1892, however, a movement was started in Britain to stop the importation of cattle from Canada as there was a danger that disease might be imported from the United States, through Canada, owing to the laxness with which quarantine regulations against American cattle were carried out by the Canadian

43. Medicine Hat Times, September 14, 1888.

authorities.⁴⁴ Although the Times and other Northwest papers launched an immediate campaign to get the Canadian government to enforce its quarantine regulations more rigidly, the action of the government appears to have come too late. In November, an outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in a shipment of Canadian cattle to Scotland led to a temporary embargo being placed on the landing of live Canadian cattle in Great Britain.⁴⁵ When the embargo, rather than being lifted, was made permanent the following year,⁴⁶ the editor faulted the government for not having taken sufficiently prompt action to avert the disaster. The former system had allowed Canada to land live cattle in Great Britain without having them slaughtered at the place of disembarkation. This advantage had made it possible for Canada, the only nation possessing it, to compete with other countries in the meat trade.⁴⁷ With the loss of this advantage in 1892, the Northwest lost what was potentially its most lucrative market.

In the case of the sheep trade, the editor felt that the government showed a similar degree of ineptitude in its policies. Even though Drinnan had urged the government to establish trade relations with the Australian colonies in 1893,⁴⁸ the success of the government's efforts in that direction proved to be somewhat more far-reaching

44. Medicine Hat Times, February 18, 1892.

45. Ibid., November 9, 1892.

46. Ibid., July 20, 1893.

47. Ibid., March 31, 1892.

48. Ibid., November 30, 1893.

than he expected. By 1894 Australian, as well as American, mutton was displacing that of the Northwest in the British Columbia market.

In June of 1894 the editor of the Medicine Hat News wrote:

He [the Hon. Mackenzie Bowell] proposes to give to the Australian sheep-man such advantages over his Canadian competitor that the latter will be literally nowhere in the race. The result cannot fail to be the killing of the sheep-raising industry in the Northwest, almost ere it has been well begun. How Mr. Bowell is able to reconcile this policy with the idea of Protection to home industries, of which he has been a life-long champion and exponent, we confess we cannot see.⁴⁹

Early in 1894, due to insufficiently strict quarantine regulations and the carelessness of an overworked government inspector, a herd of sheep infected with scab was allowed to be imported into the Northwest from the United States.⁵⁰ As the infected sheep were sold as breeder stock, it soon spread throughout the Territories. Consequently, it was found among sheep landed in Great Britain early in 1895.⁵¹ The British inspectors insisted that they be slaughtered immediately, and agricultural interests were soon demanding that an embargo, similar to that on cattle, be imposed. As the Canadian government did not appear to be taking any action to prevent future exports of infected sheep, the British government scheduled sheep from Canada as well as the United States in December of that year.⁵² The same

49. Medicine Hat News, June 28, 1894.

50. Ibid., March 22, 1894.

51. Ibid., January 31, 1895.

52. Ibid., December 12, 1895.

issue of the News that carried the announcement of the embargo, contained the following editorial:

There is a knock out blow to the sheep industry of Alberta and Western Assiniboia, whose only profitable market has been in the old country. It is useless to ship to the States owing to the low price obtaining there. The British Columbia market is also closed to us owing to the importation of cheap mutton from Australia and the western states.

The earnest attention of the Dominion Government is commended to this matter. The only possible remedy is the establishment of a rigid quarantine along the international boundary line....This would prevent contamination of our flocks from the States and should satisfy the imperial authorities to the extent that they would at least relax the embargo as far as our western sheep are concerned.⁵³

What made the loss hardest to bear was the reason for the government's failure to act with sufficient haste. It was afraid that a strict quarantine on American sheep entering western Canada would have provoked retaliatory measures by the United States against the shipment of sheep, to that country, from Ontario and Quebec.⁵⁴ Once again, as in so many other cases, the interests of the Northwest appeared to have been sacrificed for those of eastern Canada.

Because the government had so often disregarded the needs of the west, little faith was put in the announcement on December 4, 1895, that it was considering a plan for opening an export trade in dressed Canadian meats to Great Britain.⁵⁵ This plan, which envisaged

53. Medicine Hat News, December 12, 1895.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

the establishment of slaughterhouses, cold shipment in steamships to Britain and distribution depots in England, was viewed by the editor as just another election promise. In the end it turned out to be precisely that, for the Conservatives lost the election.

v

Nationally, policy in regard to the fisheries is usually considered to be an important aspect of the National Policy. This issue, quite naturally, never assumed any importance in the eyes of the editors of the Medicine Hat papers. Although the papers sporadically carried news items about negotiations with the United States on this question, the only occasions on which it was mentioned editorially were when the editors suggested that fishing rights in Canadian waters should be traded for a reciprocity agreement,⁵⁶ or when overly bellicose statements by prominent Americans excited the editors' feelings of nationalism.⁵⁷

The growing disenchantment of the editors with the tariff policy of the Conservative party, as it affected the west, along with what the editors considered to be an increasingly responsible attitude toward tariff policy on the part of the Liberals, was one of the factors which brought about the gradual shift from an independent to a moderately Liberal position by the Medicine Hat paper. Until

56. For an example see Medicine Hat Times, May 14, 1891.

57. For an example see Medicine Hat Times, August 31, 1888.

just before the election of 1891 the Times had advocated unrestricted reciprocity as the policy most advantageous to the west. The apparent willingness of the Conservatives to undertake a downward revision of the tariff had, however, gained the support of the paper for that party in the early nineties. When a sufficient measure of relief was not forthcoming, though, the Medicine Hat paper gradually shifted its position. Shortly before the election of 1896 the sympathies of the editor became distinctly Liberal.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Just as Confederation had grown out of the problems faced by the British North American colonies of the mid-nineteenth century, so the National Policy grew out of what were basically the same problems in the period after 1867. In a narrow sense, just as Confederation was intended to solve the economic problems of the separate colonies in 1867 through the development of an enlarged and integrated market for the products of the various colonies, so the National Policy was to solve the continuing problem of economic stagnation that overtook the new Dominion. This was to be accomplished through a policy of commercial expansion based on the settlement of the west. That this was so is hardly surprising considering that essentially the same men who had brought the new nation into being provided its leadership during most of the first thirty years of its existence. Of this group, one man stood out as the unquestioned leader; it was his ideas that were translated into the policies by which the nation was to be governed during its formative years. Macdonald's vision for the new nation, glimpsed at Confederation, was made manifest in the National Policy. He foresaw an independent nation under the British flag, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and one day capable of rivalling the American Union to the south.

The program for building and maintaining this separate Canadian nation on the North American continent encompassed a domestic policy of economic nationalism based on railway building, immigration and settlement, and protective tariffs. The settlement of the vast western domain, acquired by the federal government almost immediately after Confederation, was the basis of the whole scheme. Immigrants would have to be equipped with the goods and implements necessary for agriculture, and the settlers would provide a continuing market for the manufactures of eastern industry. This would be realized only if a system of transportation was developed for the movement of manufactured products to the settlers in the newly opened western lands, and for the shipment of their agricultural produce to the large urban markets in central Canada. The Canadian Pacific Railway was to provide this transportation link, and the protective tariff was to insure that it did not go unused. Thus the west and the east, the former as a producer of agricultural products and raw materials, the latter as a producer of manufactured goods, would be integrated into a continental economic unit, protected from foreign competition by a tariff system which screened out products which could be produced at home.

In at least two important respects, however, this grand design was vulnerable to the influence of conditions originating outside the boundaries of the new Dominion. The settlers to people the west had to come largely from the emigrant producing areas of the Old World

because eastern Canada's population was incapable of producing the great number of settlers necessary for such an immense undertaking. Secondly, Canada produced a surplus of agricultural products even before the settlement of the west was commenced. The enormous increase in production which the development of that region would entail, made the success of the whole scheme dependent upon Canada's ability to market these surplus agricultural products in world markets. Without settlement and profitable markets for the produce of the new frontier, the west could not provide the anticipated stimulus for eastern industrial expansion.

It was the misfortune not only of the framers of the National Policy, but of Canada as a whole, that the project happened to coincide in time with a decline in the price of agricultural products on the world market. This decline in prices resulted in the adoption of protective tariffs and regulations by those very nations upon which Canada depended for expanding markets for her agricultural exports. In this conjunction of events, the western farmer, hampered by high operating and living costs due to the protective tariff at home, could not produce the stimulus for industrial expansion, which alone could have brought the economies of mass production to Canadian industry, and a consequent enlargement of the domestic market for agricultural products. The Dominion's ability to attract the emigrants flowing out of Europe was also hampered by the availability of lands in the

better known western territories of the United States. Not until good land became scarce in that area at the end of the century did the frontier of settlement turn northward to the plains of the Canadian Northwest.

The National Policy was a program worked out by eastern politicians for the solution of eastern economic problems. Had world conditions been more favorable, the communities in the west that grew up as a result of the application of the National Policy might not have found its effects so restrictive to the rapid development they so ardently desired. However, this was not the case. Medicine Hat, like many other pioneer communities, depended for its development and prosperity on a number of factors such as the expenditure of capital on railway construction, on public works, on a continual flow of settlers and, as time went on and the area slowly developed, on the income from the sale of the products of the region in external markets. But in many instances the editors of the Medicine Hat papers saw the National Policy as having a restrictive effect upon such developments.

While there was a deep and emotional patriotism evident in the editorials written by these early newspapermen, there was also a feeling that the west was too often looked upon by eastern politicians as a colony to be exploited for the benefit of those regions which held the reins of power. Westerners grasped the vision of a great trans-

continental nation which Macdonald held out before them, but inept legislation and eastern monopoly appeared to exclude them from any enjoyment of the benefits that realization of this vision would bring.

The editors demanded that the west be represented in the Dominion Parliament. Although it was quickly granted, the overwhelming majority of seats held by the east effectively prevented any adequate consideration of western needs and aspirations. The very members that Westerners elected to Parliament often appeared to serve eastern interests rather than pressing the requirements of the Northwest in the House. Time after time the editors were moved to write that the legislation that was beneficial to the east was of no use to the west, that in fact it often added to the burdens with which the west already had to contend. Similarly, an elected assembly for the Northwest was demanded. It was granted, but the control over expenditure remained in the hands of the Lieutenant-Governor---an appointee of the federal government. When control over the expenditure of territorial funds was granted to the Assembly, its freedom of action was only slightly increased, as it remained dependent on a federal grant for the major portion of its revenue. Throughout the period under consideration the unalienated lands of the Northwest---its greatest resource---remained under the control of the Dominion government. Consequently, the responsibility for western development, and

indirectly for the prosperity of the citizens of that area, appeared to the editors to depend on the acts of a government over which they had very little control.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, to which Medicine Hat owed its very existence, and the establishment of the government's free homestead system were two policies which had the wholehearted support of the Medicine Hat Times and News. The monopoly in western transportation which was given to the Canadian Pacific, however, was viewed as an intolerable burden for it placed the settlers at the mercy of that concern. Competition, or even the possibility of competition would, it was felt, have ensured somewhat lower freight rates. That the Medicine Hat paper was less outspoken on this issue than other Northwest papers is not surprising as the community was virtually a railway town, depending on the good will of that corporation for its largest payroll---the payroll of the divisional headquarters and shops. A line to Montana and another line from Medicine Hat to the coast, through the Crow's Nest Pass, were yearly hoped for by the editors. These additional lines did not come, however, until Calgary had established a commercial lead in southern Alberta that Medicine Hat could not hope to overtake.

Effectively barred from becoming the transportation hub of the area, Medicine Hat could only hope to grow as a result of large-scale settlement. Even though the region possessed good soil and

the longest frost-free growing season in the Northwest, the inadequacy of natural moisture made the culture of cereal grains uncertain. Without large-scale irrigation projects, therefore, agriculture was not possible throughout most of the area and such projects were not feasible unless the land could be granted in large blocks. Such large grants were not possible as only alternate sections were under the control of the federal government; the odd-numbered sections had been reserved for railway grants. In addition, the federal government was unwilling to promote the development of irrigation projects during much of the period, as it feared that such projects would give the whole Canadian west a reputation as a dry area and thus make the job of securing immigrants that much harder. Although it is doubtful that the capital necessary for such undertakings would have been available between 1885 and 1896, the reluctance of the government to consider such schemes appeared to the editors as an example of indifference to the needs of the area.

The editors also felt that the ranching industry in the area tributary to Medicine Hat suffered as a result of the Dominion's land policy. To assure that land would be available for settlement, if desired, early ranching leases were made subject to cancellation on two years' notice. Later leases did not even provide this meagre protection as settlers were allowed to enter on leased land without any prior notice being given to the leaseholder. Once again, lands

reserved for railway grants prevented the leasing of compact blocks. Finally, regulations pertaining to the amount of stock which was to be placed on the leased land were unrealistic for such a dry area, and taking this into account, the price charged for the leased land was in effect higher than in areas which were capable of supporting heavier grazing.

Relatively local problems such as rustling and horse stealing by Indians, and the need for adequate measures to prevent and control prairie fires, also brought criticism of the government by the paper at various times. Two other issues which resulted in a large measure of criticism being levelled at the federal government were the liquor permit system and the official status of the French language in the Territories. In all these issues, the editors felt that eastern politicians did not possess sufficient knowledge of conditions in the Northwest to make what were considered to be the correct decisions. In the case of the latter two issues, they felt that the federal government totally ignored the expressed wishes of the Northwest. Its interests and wishes were made subservient to the need to work out a solution which took into account the long-standing prejudices of French and English interests in eastern Canada.

During Sir John A. Macdonald's lifetime the National Policy possessed a champion who always seemed able to keep the vision of a great Canadian nation, in whose prosperity all would share, before the eyes of the people. Even the errors and the indifference, which

so often characterized government policy in regard to the Northwest, failed to shake the belief of the editors of the Medicine Hat Times that the policy would ultimately succeed. After his death, however, the rapidly changing administrations in Ottawa appeared, in the eyes of the editors, to be increasingly incapable of meeting the needs of the Northwest. As confidence in the successive Conservative governments waned, the editors looked more and more to the Liberal party of Wilfrid Laurier as a reasonable alternative.

The history of the Medicine Hat papers' reaction to the issue of tariffs illustrates this change most clearly. Until the election of 1891 the editors of the Medicine Hat Times believed that unrestricted reciprocity would be of great benefit to the Northwest. The editors supported such a policy, it would appear, not with any hope that unrestricted reciprocity would be adopted by the Dominion government, but in the hope that eastern politicians could be convinced to give the Northwest some form of compensation in return for the west's acquiescence in a protective tariff which hindered rather than aided its development. The editor seemed to feel that a suitable compensation would have been a more adequately financed and more aggressive immigration policy. The danger to Canadian independence inherent in commercial union, however, and the failure to obtain a more vigorous immigration policy, brought a change in tactics. After 1891 the editors espoused the more moderate cause of tariff reform. The reductions made in 1894 on a number of items of particular importance to the Northwest were loudly applauded by the Times. But the failure of the govern-

ment to continue this policy of tariff reform in the following session, along with the loss of the British market for Canadian cattle and sheep, brought sharp criticism from the Times' successor. Concurrent with this disillusionment with Conservative intentions in regard to tariff reform came a change in what the editors saw as the Liberal attitude toward tariff policy. The Liberals appeared to have abandoned the quest for commercial union and espoused the cause of tariff reform. In addition, an ineptly handled tour of Conservative cabinet ministers, followed by a highly successful tour by Wilfrid Laurier, signalled a change of sympathy on the part of many westerners.

Although not directly related to the National Policy, the issue which appears to have been most instrumental in convincing the editors that the Conservative party was no longer capable of providing the kind of leadership that the west desired, was the inept handling of the Manitoba school question. The editor felt that the federal intervention was unwarranted and feared that Northwest interests might be sacrificed to eastern prejudices in a similar manner. That the government, with a large majority, was unable to get this unpopular measure through Parliament, seemed to the editor proof positive of its inability to provide the direction that the country needed. To Forster, the statesmanlike stand taken by Laurier during the controversy appeared to bode well for the future development not only of the Northwest, but of Canada.

The National Policy, then, had the general support of the editors of the Medicine Hat paper throughout most of the period from 1885 to 1896. Conditions largely external to Canada, however, resulted in it achieving only limited success before 1896. Therefore, in the period after Macdonald's death, the eastern bias of legislation and the apparent lack of appreciation of western needs, combined with the growing ineptitude of succeeding Conservative administrations, resulted in the editors losing faith in the viability of the National Policy.

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